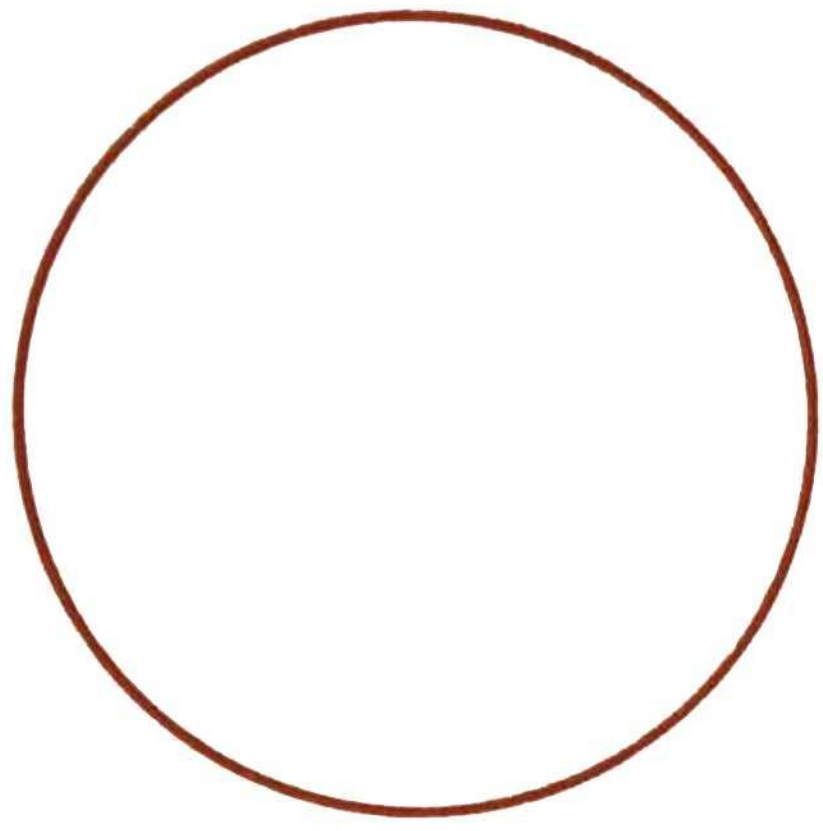
THE RELIGION OF NO-RELIGION



THE RELIGION OF NO-RELIGION

by Frederic Spiegelberg

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JAMES LADD DELKIN

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CHAPTER ONE

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE BUT EVERYTHING?

I and this mystery here we stand.

WALT WHITMAN

TODAY IT IS NOT only good and right to be tolerant, but it is at the same time fashionable, and fashionableness always minimizes the value of a truth. This kind of superficial tolerance is often shown in those more or less professional discussions about religion which are carried on at a thousand parties every evening. The result of these conversations is generally the same—almost everybody agrees that in the end all religions mean the same and have a common aim, just as in ancient times all roads were supposed to lead to Rome.

It is easy to make such generalizing statements about the uniform character of all religions, and yet after they are made everybody feels somehow uneasy about them. Something within us tells us that we have deceived ourselves by rushing to some harmonious agreement without first having really mastered the field by investigation, and now we experience some discomfort in the vague feeling that somewhere, over our heads, Jehova, Shang-ti and Quetzal-cohuatl are wondering about our bold statement of their relationship.

Are those other people who know a trifle more about the history of religions, and who like to make their knowledge visible by pointing to the characteristic differences within all religions on earth, closer to the truth? Are they less superficial? Sometimes they are not. In the overfondness for the differences which they have studied intellectually, they forget about the deeper need of mankind, that longing and yearning for an answer to life's problems which are active in all its creations, however differently they may be shaped.

Only after having fully realized the difficulties which are always implied in these discussions, are we entitled to look for a

general definition of religion. It cannot be given and all attempts in history to come to such a definition have proved to be short-sighted and narrow in some respects. But that does not mean that we should not try again and again to find out what we basically mean whenever we use the word "Religion."

As long as we take it for granted that this world exists and that we are living our lives within it, then there is no point where religion could develop and the facts with which it is dealing could be seen. Curiously enough, a great many people seem perfectly able to live in a mood where life is simply taken for granted. This is indeed curious because as soon as religion takes possession of our minds, the unbroken secular attitude can no longer be recognized as healthy, but will be looked at as a kind of disease. How does this change towards religion occur? We have many witnesses for this event. They are all different, yet they all agree that at a certain time, at some unexpected moment, something inexpressible happened to them; right in the midst of life this very life became questionable, it lost its character of being matter-of-course, lost its supposed self-containedness.

Reality in itself becomes doubtful and miraculous—that is the general background of all those situations of so-called "revelation," which, moreover, are as different as can be. The Norwegian novelist Anker Larsen, describes in his "Philosopher's Stone"[1] how the little boy, sitting lonely in the garden and gazing at an elderberry tree, suddenly becomes aware that the tree "stands open," and through this event the entire world around him loses its density, leaving as it were some holes open which give him a thoroughfare into an unknown Beyond.

According to an ancient tradition (Asvaghosa's Buddhacarita)[2] the Buddha likewise once remembered that in his childhood, sitting under a rose-apple tree in his father's garden, he had had an extraordinary experience which may have given the pattern for his later teaching.

Thus trees are frequently mentioned in connection with religious awakening and this makes us understand why tree-worship was so important in primitive mankind. But trees are

[1] Anker Larsen, *Philosophers Stone.*

[2] Bible of the World. Robert O. Ballou, Friedrich Spiegelberg and Horace L. Friess. NewYork, Viking Press, 1939, p.204.

only one example. Anything else could stand in their place as basic symbol for an experience of a religious awakening. Walt Whitman describes his beloved grass in a similar way:

> *Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,*
> *A scented gift and remembrancer designedly dropt,*
> *Bearing the owner's name some way in the corners,*
> *that we may see and remark, and say Whose?*

Similar feelings are awakened in him at the sight of cattle:

> *Oxen that rattle the yoke and chain or halt in the*
> *leafy shade,*
> *What is that you express in your eyes?*
> *It seems to me more than all the print I have read in*
> *my life.*
> *And the look of the bay mare shames silliness out of me.*[1]

Remarkable trees, particularly large, unusually shaped or situated, as well as remarkable stones and hills, impressive spots on earth, the stars, strange people or special events have often been considered as "holy," which means that at those places the human consciousness felt most inclined to doubt about the meaning and origin of this world we live in. The Hindus have a word which characterizes those spots; they are called *pitha*, which means a meeting-place of two utterly different realms of reality, of the world around us and the Beyond. In our own religious language we have agreed to call those worldly situations—which are connected with a birth of religious feelings—"symbols." Now in both cases, in India as well as in the Western world, pitha and symbol have often been confused with the content of the religious experience itself; pitha and symbol have become holy in themselves, they have been worshipped as such and have replaced that awareness which originally was only transmitted *by* them. The mediating tool has become a purpose in itself, the mediator has become a God. Thus it has happened time and again that the finger pointing to the moon was still looked at and considered as highly important after its purpose had already been fulfilled and the moon had been seen. Thus it happened often that people longing to go to the other shore of life's river,

[1] These quotations taken from Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass, *Song of Myself*, chapters 6 and 13.

having found a boat, settled down in it, content in their minds with what they had reached and forgetting the purpose of the boat to carry them over.

In this way, religious ceremonies in many cases become an aim in themselves, and the names for God[1] replace His reality. Rainer Maria Rilke says in his Stundenbuch:[2]

Only a narrow wall stands 'tween us both
Through no design; for it might be
A call from Thee or even me would make
It soon give way
Without alarm or noise.
Out of Thy Symbols is the wall built up.

Realizing the danger which lies in our tendency to confuse the earthly expression of revelation with what may be called the divine realm itself, we must always be aware of the fact that symbols are merely pointers, alarm-signs, trying to make us conscious of another side of reality, but themselves not yet belonging to that other side but wholly rooted within our secular limitations. All the religious expressions in history, even all the ideas of God developed in theology, and all thought of mankind circling around the divine, are merely traces of God in our lives. But traces are not, of course, the thing in itself, which we are after.

The process of spiritual enlightenment is really such a fundamental change that, viewed from the standpoint of the attained revelation, it must be considered as a total unity without any parts or stages. Yet, looked at from the attitude of reflection and psychological investigation, several moments have always been distinguishable within this process. In other words, that which strikes us like lightning in one blow, can always be unfolded in ensuing scientific research.

Theology, as well, could manage everywhere in the world to unfold the way in which revelation works, and to describe its various steps. One of the most striking examples for this is the description of "how to catch the cow" in Zen-Buddhism—a parable for the way the soul seeks to unite itself with that

[1] Friedrich Spiegelberg, *New Names of God*, in Review of Religion, March 1938.

[2] Rainer Maria Rilke, *Das Stunden-Buch*, Leipzig, Insel-Verlag, 1920, p. 9

other side of itself, which in the beginning seems to be "lost."

Suzuki publishes in his "Manual of Zen-Buddhism"[1] two different series of those famous "cow-herding pictures" which were quite widespread in the Far East, and are certainly most worthwhile studying in order to achieve a closer understanding of the ways of thought and feeling in the later Buddhist world. The influence of these pictures and of these ideas has already been so far-reaching in the Western world, that an authority in this field, James Bissett Pratt, could say, in reviewing the last volume of Suzuki's writings[2] "there are two kinds of cultured people; those who have read Professor Suzuki's works on Zen-Buddhism, and those who have not."

Let us have a look at the pictures. The two series published by Suzuki are utterly different, not only in time—the second series being centuries later in its conception—but also as to their meaning. The first, more primitive series shows us a man trying to catch a black cow, which evidently is the representation of the dark side of his own ego, that is, the passions which have "gone astray," and which he now tries very hard to bring into harmony with that other part of his soul which he acknowledges as his own human self. And he succeeds in his hunt. He fastens a rope through the cow's nose, turns her around so that she, or rather the power within him which is represented by her, is no longer running away in another direction but faces him. In the further continuation of the hunt the cow is gradually changed from black to white, which means that the passions against which the man is struggling so hard in the beginning, are no longer looked at as something dangerous or destructive. The cowherd becomes identified with the beast until the whole problem which started the search vanishes into an empty circle.

The second later and more subtle series of cowherding pictures has an entirely different idea about the opposition MAN-COW as its basis. Here the cow, or rather the bull, because he is here considered to be male, is the representative of that higher ego which seems to be disconnected from us, so that we have to chase it in order to become one with this better, divine reality

[1] Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki Manual of Zen-Buddhism. Kyoto "The Eastern Buddhist Society," 1935.

[2] J. B. Pratt, "Asia," January 1939, p. 58.

of ourselves. The designer of these paintings knew that he could not very well start his series with the actual catch, but that quite an amount of preparatory work is needed for all kinds of higher spiritual achievements. As a matter of fact, the situation in which we find ourselves is not even so clear that we would always know exactly what we are after and in which direction we would want to proceed.

Therefore the first picture of this series seems to be highly important—the man standing in the landscape, as we all do, whether it be a natural or spiritual one, with both his hands raised, and looking around as if he does not even know what he is searching for. He seems somehow wondering what it is all about, rather worried because the situation seems not altogether perfect. Something is wrong, something is lacking somewhere. Life has become questionable to him, that is, he has just entered that decisive conversion which we have described before when we referred to the way in which modern writers picture it.

The Christian dogma expresses this experience by the statement that the world is not perfect—is no longer so, but is spoiled by the effects of original sin. It has to be changed to become once more an expression of God's holy will. But this "sinfulness" of all reality is known to the religious experience to be more than a mere moral defect. It is, rather, a metaphysical status in which we find the world, whenever our spiritual eyes are opened to realize it, in its very essence.

Astonishment, wondering, is, according to Aristotle, the birthplace of philosophy because it means that we have become aware of the miracle of "to be," of the astonishing fact that reality here and now is what we call existent. "The mystery of life is not a problem to be solved, it is a reality to be experienced."[1] For now we realize that the world did not just "happen," is not a matter-of-course or quite autonomous towards itself, but utterly doubtful and with a great questionmark hanging behind it. That is what we may call the miracle of all being, the miracle of existence, and we may add that religiously speaking, the word miracle has no plural form

But then, a law inherent in our minds—which Kant has called the category of substantialization—drives us on to think about this interrogation sign as something existent in itself, as being a

[1] I. I. Van De Leeuw, *The Conquest of Illusion*, A. A. Knopf, 1928.

IZANAGI AND IZANAMI CREATING THE WORLD

from Toni-Nobu, Jim Dai

substance about which we are able to talk and which might be given names. Thus it enters our world as something positive, which we later try to locate within reality, while, in the beginning, reality had only been questioned by it.

The way in which this is done in theology becomes most clearly visible in Paul Tillich's attempt to name the subject of our experience by calling it "that by which existence is called in question."[1] He objectifies our experience in a way which logically is not well founded. Of course Tillich is aware, on the other hand, of the boldness of his undertaking when he writes about the quest for salvation: "No man is able to face his boundary-situation in its fullness. He can stand it only as far as he anticipates a possibility beyond the boundary-situation which is not his possibility."[2]

All such attempts to establish metaphysical entities by a trickery of language should be answered with Santayana's words:[3] "It would be a pity if the abuse of logic hardened men's hearts against poetry and made them enemies to their own intellectual life."

This stage of our spiritual development—is it really a stage?—has been described by the second picture of Suzuki's bull-herding series, where now we see the man discovering tracks of the bull on the soil. Traces of God in our lives—we now believe to have discovered even a direction within reality—where to go, what to long for instead of merely standing and wondering about who-knows-what!

God's omnipresence, or omni-non-presence, has given way to the desire to find special places where His actuality could be more strongly experienced than in other places. That means we are searching for symbols. We are realizing His presence in certain spots, in certain situations, under certain circumstances which now seem to be pregnant with revelation, while other places lack this quality. We feel like hunters on this path where we have discovered His footprints, and this makes it understandable why mankind's earliest expressions for religious experiences have been frequently words of the hunter's language.

The ancient Sanskrit word for religion is Marga, and the

[1] Paul Tillich, *Protestantismus als Kritik und Gestaltung*, p. 8.

[2] Paul Tillich, from Preliminary Draft of *Systematic Theology*, part 3, p. 13.

[3] George Santayana, *The Realm of Essence*, Constable, London, 1928, p. 180.

Hindus distinguish three phases within this history of their religion—Karma marga, Jnana marga and Bhakti marga—the religion of action, the religion of knowledge, and the religion of devotion. The word marga originally meant path, and what kind of a path was meant we can easily see by looking at the etymological meaning of the expression where we then discover that the related expression Mriga means antelope, deer, and that this word-group goes back to the root 'mrig' which means to search. Thus Marga, religion, is originally the hunter's path, the trail where we are pursuing a deer which we are trying to get.

Hence the importance of a right knowledge of the various footprints, the awareness of their differences, and the constant mentioning of the god's or the demon's footprints in ancient times. Long before palmistry was created, people were interested in the shape of the foot-sole, which can be proved by the fact that ancient eastern sculptures do not show any sign of detailed structure on the palms, while at the same time elaborate pictures of the divine footprints have been created. In many countries traces of the gods are shown, especially in India. Gods and holy persons, Yogis, are able to leave their footprints even in the air or when walking over stones. In Ceylon a very large stone footprint is shown, which is explained by the Hindus to be that of Vishnu, by the Buddhists to be Buddha's and by some Christians to be that of Thomas, the apostle to the Indians. And the Tibetans know a tale about a kind of Jonah by the name of Minapada, who while fishing was swallowed by a big fish. Living in his belly he meditated for twelve years and listened to the religious exercise which the highest Lord gave to the goddess Uma in the deep waters. After the fish was caught and Minapada was liberated, he was so highly endowed with divine inspiration, that while dancing his foot imprinted itself in the stone as though in soft mud.[1]

But even so, one knows that sometimes the divine traces are rather indistinct—as indistinct as those imprints which the deer makes on a rock.[2] If for the religious consciousness those traces grow still less distinct than that, they finally reach a state where,

[1] Alf. Grünwedel, *Die Geschichte der 84 Zauberer* (Mahasiddhas) from the Tibetan Baessler Archiv, Band 5, Heft 4-5, No. 8.

[2] Visuddhi-Magga. Paragraph 168.

as the famous Sufi poet Rumi says, God is "in a place beyond uttermost place, in a tract without shadow of trace."[1]

So we might presume that of the three types of early mankind which the anthropologists have discovered—hunter, farmer and herdsman—the hunter was the first and decisive one to supply the material for religious ideas, while the "cult" (agriculture) and the "pastor" (herdsman) probably entered the religious field much later. The hunter cannot think about the basic reality behind or within this ordinary so-called reality in other terms but in his hunter's terms, and he calls it a deer. Later, the farmer calls it the spirit of the crops and of fertility, and thus this basic principle takes up the shape of the prevailing ideas within any group of mankind. The Ancients used to call that the metamorphoses of their gods. And Aristotle gives the philosophical explanation for this fact by saying "Whatsoever is received comes to him that receives it after the manner of the recipient."

The picture of the hunter's trail and of the traces we must look for, is surprisingly widespread and famous throughout the history of religions. Everybody knows the motive, used in East Asiatic painting, of the wild swan flying over the surface of the waters and having one of his feet hanging down just touching the water and leaving a faint trail along it. This swan symbolizes God Brahma, and the water the ocean of life. The idea suggested in these pictures is that divine spirit, though never diving deeply into existence, will yet never lose contact with it. But this contact and those traces are always vague. As Rainer Maria Rilke expresses it:

> *But the path to Thee is fearfully long,*
> *And none having trod it of late, blown o'er.*[2]

So we have to console ourselves with

> *The instinct that can tell*
> *That God is on the field when He*
> *Is most invisible.*[3]

[1] From a poem of Jalaluddhin Rumi, quoted in Reynold A. Nicholson's *The Mystics of Islam*, G. Bell, London, 1914, p. 161.
[2] Rilke's *Das Stunden-Buch*, p. 80.
[3] Hymn by Frederick W. Faber, The American Hymnal, 1855, No. 470, stanza 3.

All these examples tell us that what we can get in our search for the Absolute in this world, are just frail symptoms and fragments. As Frederick W. Faber expresses it: "Angels . . . sing us sweet fragrance of the songs above."[1]

Although in the East the picture of the flying swan is the symbol of this relationship, Western authors—philosophers as well as poets—generally prefer to talk more abstractly about the divine signature. Josiah Royce says, "In asserting: 'I know that this revelation is from God,' the believer in the revelation asserts in substance, that in some sense and by some means he personally knows as it were, the divine signature; he knows by what marks the Divine Being reveals himself. This is the vast presumption, if you will, upon which the believer in Revelation depends for his assurance, he knows God's autograph."[1]

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." (II Corinthians, 4, 7.) In these words is contained the entire problem of religious symbolism. The divine power, which we have recognized to be the principle of doubt towards existence as a whole, can be approached by us only in this very world of ours, as we are not made for heavenly planes. Thus we have no other means of expressing ourselves but by "earthen" ones. This we should always remember, especially in view of the fact that so many religions claim that their dogmas, their symbols, are not made of worldly material, that their prophets were not human but divine beings, and that their names for God do not belong to, and are not taken from, ordinary language. They claim to have recognized much more of that divine life than just traces. And this claim of theirs is not a foolish mistake but a tragic necessity. Our mind is built that way and we will never escape this our nature. How can this dilemma be explained?

The explanation lies in the very fact that the human being is not an integrated unity but is mostly scattered through various levels of existence. While we are, with one part of ourselves, deeply aware of the miracle of all being, another part of ourselves stands in dullest blindness. And what the Icarus in us has discovered is of no validity for the brute in us. The brute does

[1] Hymn by Faber, No. 578, stanza 4.
[2] Josiah Royce, *Sources of Religious Insight*, Scribners, New York, 1912, p. 22.

not understand what Icarus is saying, or rather he misunderstands it on all sides, because he gives his own interpretation of Icarus' words. That is the reason why all basic religious statements are mostly misunderstood and must even be necessarily misunderstandable. T. S. Eliot stresses this point when he writes:

> Of divine illumination, it may be said that probably every man knows when he has it, but that any man is likely to think that he has it when he has it not.[1]

To try to overcome that misunderstandableness in any religious dogma means therefore, to run straight away from true religion. While it is impossible to give any valid and general definition of religion, it is at least possible to say that one of the main and necessary characteristics of all religion has been, is, and will always be the fact that its statements are subject to misinterpretation. To keep silent instead would be no remedy against this difficulty, because silence itself can be utterly misunderstood just as well.

That the divine substance is for us always contained in "earthen" vessels, can be seen in the fact that most theological dogmas express basic religious truths in an illusionary or conventional framing. Therefore they are subject to criticism and must be denied by a rationalistic approach. Their framework never stands the analysis of science. Let us look at a typical example to prove this. Most religions agree in the dogma of immortality, which is a "basic truth" for the religious consciousness; but they all describe this fact of immortality in a fantastic way, which becomes a convention through centuries of time. The details of this illusionary framing cannot be maintained against the arguments of any rationalistic critic.

What then is there still to be recognized in these traditional utopian illusions of a life after death and of a future, better existence? Certainly not the utopia in them and not the phantasies. But at their root remains that basic truth of immortality, deathlessness, which we find in so many religions. This true religious statement points to the fact that our awareness of the questionability of this universe, our so-called inspired insight into the divine background of reality, has absolutely nothing to do with anything else within this reality, and is therefore not

[1] T. S. Eliot, *After Strange Gods*, Harcourt Brace & Co., 1934, p. 64.

subject to the laws of existence, especially not to the law of the flux of time, of death and decay.

This religious consciousness means something other than "everything," or as the Chinese express it, it does not concern Shin (anything real), but Do (reality itself). Psychologically speaking—to that part of ourselves which is awake to the miracle behind life, death does not matter, because this miracle, as well as our participation in it, is evidently just not affected by the secular event of death at all. In this way we may understand Saint Paul's bold exclamation "O death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory." (I Cor. 15, 55.)

This treasure of a conqueror's pride, however, is again poured into "earthen vessels," and here it readily finds explanations for its meaning in the old-fashioned manner of life-after-death phantasies, or in the new-fashioned way of occult-telepathic experiences, which are supposed to "prove" the existence of individual souls after death. A great deal of psychic research has been done in this direction. Though it seems unlikely that anything of importance and of scientific relevance should ever come out of these studies, I feel not entitled to judge about this field, as it is already the reservation of specialists in what is called today E.S.P. (extra-sensorial perception).

But on the other hand, whatever may be the result of these studies, they certainly would not have any bearing on the religious mind. Occult phenomena may be here and there highly interesting as hypothetical forerunners of future scientific discoveries, but to think that they could ever replace a living religion, or that they would have something definite to add to the relation of man to the divine reality, is a mistake born of a lack of religious insight. In fact, this lack is probably the main reason for the reviving interest in occultism in our day, which means that occultism would just be the other side of rationalism, both being created out of a diseased mentality which has lost its roots. Those roots are found in that inspiration which made the Psalmist say: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee." (Ps. 73, 25.)

The same difference as we have shown between a basic truth and an illusionary framing in the religious statement about the overcoming of death, can be shown in most religious dogmas in history. Dogmas mean, as we have already seen, the attempt to

give expression to an overwhelming religious insight in the terms of ordinary human experience. As a modern Indian writes: "After waking from Samadhi (highest religious insight-experience) the different aspirants explain it in accordance with their previous beliefs about Truth, according to preconceived notions and previously accepted modes of reasoning."[1]

When the genuine reality is felt behind the so-called reality in a way of antagonism and in exceptional situations only, there needs must arise the idea of a dualistic structure of the universe. Religious dualism is not born out of moral considerations, but has as its background, this basic experience of an opposition between everyday reality around us, and this higher, inexpressible other side of reality, the "entirely different"[2] beyond and behind every graspable thing.

Man conceives of this every-day side, and the unseen other side of reality, mostly as two dual and opposing forces, trying to live on the dual planes of holiness and secular life. This, by inference, inevitably makes the secular life of everyday seem inferior to that generally hidden and unrevealed existence of holy life. The mystic Tauler says "The man, to whom cometh but a little drop of the light of Grace, to him all that is not God becomes as bitter as gall upon the tongue."[3]

Necessary misunderstandableness of all symbolic expressions and *devaluation of one side of reality* seem to be the main characteristics of all early religions. In the course of their historical development, however, they discover a way out of these dilemmas by resorting to the *paradox*. A startling, illogical statement thus becomes the only adequate expression for religious truth. As Tertullian, the father of Christian dogmatics said: "I believe it, because it is absurd."

To say such a thing does not mean to sacrifice or deny one's intellect (as Tertullian's words have often been understood) but means on the contrary—trying to find the only way in which religious facts can be expressed without sacrificing the

[1] S. Santinatha, *Critical Exam. of the Phil. of Religion*, Amalner, 1938, Vol. 1, Gen'l Intro. p. 4 and 9.

[2] Rudoff Otto, *Das Ganz-Andere*, as used in his book *Das Heilege* "The Idea of the Holy," H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1924.

[3] Tauler, quoted from *Light, Life and Love, Selections from the German Mystics of the Middle Ages* by W. R. Inge Methuen, London, 1919, p. 25.

intellect and without saying something which is necessarily subject to that misinterpretation which takes the intended meaning away from all symbols.

To understand this let us look at a striking example. The early Christian Church already realized the danger of all symbol-deterioration in the way it treated the problem of the relationship between the two natures of Christ—human and divine—or as we may well interpret this problem—the relation between secular and holy reality. How are these two divergent aspects of reality related to each other? How is the great question-mark located within this world around us? Where can the penetration of existence be found within this very existence?

The early Christian patriarchs have given two simple and one-sided answers to this main question of all theology. Some, impressed by the striking miracle of revelation, pointed out that God and the world, holy and secular natures would be entirely divergent and inexpressibly antagonistic; some others, starting in their personal feeling with the mystic insight into God's omnipresence, rather stressed the fact that revelation could occur only through and in the shape of this world we live in, through each and every day.

This famous dispute between the so-called Antiochian and Alexandrian theologians of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries was settled in an extremely wise and careful way at the Council of Chalcedon in the year 451, where, as the definite solution of the problem it was stated that the two natures were unconfused as well as undivided. From the logical aspect of course, this formula must be called a paradox and absurd. It was frequently looked at as being only a weak compromise between the two struggling parties, yet in fact, its meaning can by no means be covered by considering it as compromising and harmonizing at all, for it contains an essential element of religious truth which could never be stated in a more drastic and adequate manner.

The two aspects of reality are indeed neither united nor separated from each other in the ordinary sense of the word. If anything can be said about the relation of God and the world, inspiration and dullness, it is only this—that any statement about their connection must be checked by an additional statement about their unthinkable divergence within this connection. And vice versa, to become true, any statement about their dif-

ference needs limitation by pointing to their interpenetration. And all heresies in history can be traced back to a disregard of this paradox. This disregard expresses itself as a one-sidedness in looking at the God-World relation.

This has not only been realized in early Christian dogmas, but just as well, and sometimes even with the same expressions, in other religions. Thus one of the famous ancient Indian scriptures, the Isa-Upanishad says about the Atman, which is the name for the enlightened higher spiritual self: "He is far and He is near. He is within all and He is outside all.—Into deep darkness fall those who follow only this side of reality. Into deeper darkness fall those who follow the beyond."

A few quotations may clarify the antagonism in religious symbolism which throughout the ages has made use of almost all the prepositions of the language in order to express God's relation to the world. God has been placed in, within, behind, through, before, things and the world.

A striking example for the preposition 'in' can be found in the Zen-Buddhist "Song of Enlightenment."[1]

One nature, perfect and pervading, circulates in all natures;
One reality, all comprehensive, contains within itself all realities;
The one moon reflects itself wherever there is a sheet of water,
And all the moons in the waters are embraced within the one moon.

And for the preposition 'through' we may refer to a poem of William Wordsworth's:

I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.[2]

[1] *Bible of the World*, p. 362.
[2] William Wordsworth, *Tintern Abbey*, lines 93-103.

To quote another example: In the Bhagavadgita, the Song of the Lord, which is the main scripture of Hinduism, God Krishna says about himself and his relation to the world: (IX, 4-5) "By me, in the form of the unmanifested has all this universe been created; all beings abide in me, but I abide not in them. Yet beings abide not in me . . . I bear these things yet I abide not in beings; my own self is the abode of beings." These absurd statements certainly could not be understood without realizing the necessity of the paradox, as we have explained it here.

But where on earth has this religion of the paradox ever been lived? The Truth about it, to be sure, has been discovered frequently, but this discovery seems to have remained always only through an infinitesimal fraction of time and to have been abandoned immediately in the very next historical moment. As far as actual religions are concerned, they are all heretical, breaking away in their practice from the ambivalent attitude into this or that one-sidedness and fixation. How true and how faithful for instance, are those religious attitudes and systems which hold to the once recognized traces of divine life or to the only orthodox moments of revelation, not allowing anyone to discover new traces and a new path?

This kind of orthodoxy is in fact just the contrary of its name; it is a heresy restricting the higher reality to only a few traditionally sanctioned spots and miraculous situations within this world. Whenever it means anything else but sustaining the paradox and the questionableness of its own statements, orthodoxy means heresy.

The divine life can be found everywhere; God is, as the Christian dogma expresses it, omnipresent. But the uninspired, obtuse attitude just described denies this fact, thus creating a duality of good and bad, positive and negative aspects of life, a dualism which is opposed to a devout acceptance of life, and which we must try to overcome.

It is understandable that a reaction should arise against that. And it is understandable also, that this reaction might take the shape of iconoclasm, that is, of a violent abolition of all existing symbols. As this revolt is not started from a limited rationalistic standpoint but is a revolt against existing religious forms out of a much deeper religious feeling, we may call it a Religion of Non-Religion.

CHAPTER TWO

THE RELIGION OF NO-RELIGION

All will again be great and Mighty ..
And no churches which clasp Him tight
As though a fugitive, then wail over Him
As over a captive and wounded deer

RAINER MARIA RILKE

I SEE A BOY RUNNING along the seashore, across meadows and green fields, looking at trees and bushes, enjoying the scent of the flowers and the majesty of thick white noon-day clouds, and stimulated by his own vitality and youth. He has just read for the first time some songs of the mystic poet Rainer Maria Rilke, and the ideas of this visionary fill his heart, growing in his mind like seeds in a fertile soil. His usual, every-day consciousness has vanished, and he feels instead something deep, something holy. He calls it his higher Self. And this, his new, better transmuted Ego, feels in the so-called world nothing but holiness. These waves of the ocean and the blowing of the wind are the voice of God; all these flowers and trees are full of his glory; like Moses he sees each bush burning in sacred fire, and like the mystic shoe-maker, Jakob Boehme, after having looked for a long time at his shoe-maker's globe, he sees the bright glance of some super-cosmic sun shining from the centre of every creature around him. This whole reality has become perfect and holy. Secular life has faded away, or it has changed to some better life, more real and bright now that the former things have passed away.

And while thus enjoying this new life and this transformed reality which is nothing other than a mere testimony of God's glory and omnipresence in everything that exists, he suddenly approaches around the corner of the road—a church. And the sight of the church gives him a shock. For what on earth is a church doing in his glorified world? What can be behind these stone walls, what means this coloured light behind the windows, and what these strange sounds of music which reach his ears? All the world around has been holy, has been God's eternal

nature, has been His face and His expression. Therefore—and this is what shocks him—if there is really anything else, anything peculiar behind those walls, it could only be a matter outside God, in contrast with, or even in opposition to this eternal bliss of the all-penetrating holiness. Why else should these walls and such buildings as churches have been erected? The people who did it, intending to build a special place for God's so-called worship and for God's realization—did they not feel that God needs not such special localities, that His power and His light are spread all over the world, and surely in all places without exception?

I would not go, my heart, to Mecca or Medina,
For behold, I ever abide by the side of my Friend.
Mad would I become, had I dwelt afar, not knowing Him.
There's no worship in mosque or temple or special holy day.
At every step I have my Mecca and Kashi; sacred is every moment.[1]

This is an old song, but a modern psychologist expresses the same when he says: "Human earnestness, so fearfully direct, so anxious to improve, builds monuments to house the living God and kills him dead within an ornamental prison."[2]

Now such a feeling and such an experience has always meant the coming to birth of what we have called "The Religion of Non-Religion." In all ages of the history of mankind there have been people who wanted to separate special holy places from other parts of the world, which obviously they thought to be unholy in some way, or even which they made unholy by this very separation. We can see such places of sanctity all over the world. The temples of Egypt, Greece and Rome always had special areas surrounded by stone walls, where people were allowed to enter only after certain preparations. Precautions had to be taken so that God could not be insulted by profane people, nor could these men be hurt by the too strong holiness of the atmosphere, which filled such places with magic powers. We call these magic powers "mana," which is "tabu."

[1] Baül song, quoted in Rabindranath Tagore's *Religion of Man*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1931, p. 215.
[2] Graham Howe, *War-Dance*, Faber & Faber, London, 1937, p. 113

These old customs are not at all strange to our minds, for today also we try to make a fence around our Ego and around all its belongings on earth. Psychologists and students of folk-lore have shown us that every soul-diagram as well as every cosmic-diagram begins with a framing line, round or quadrangular. Perhaps we fear that our self-consciousness would fall into pieces or would dissolve itself into the chaos around, if not bound by some girdle which does not allow it to grow and expand too widely. Psychoanalysis tries today to loosen all such girdles and ties, in order to give room to a future expansion of the human self, which perhaps no longer needs such bounds and has become ripe to stretch into more and more unknown areas of the world of sensations and spiritual experiences. Thus it can be seen that there is an analogy between psychoanalysis and the attempts of religious prophets to break down the walls of temples and churches and to spread out divine consciousness all over the world, instead of keeping it within the borders of special localities.

We can say the same thing about special religious times. Once in every cultural development there will come an epoch when all rules of festivals and tabu-days are thrown away because there has arisen quite a new feeling, which does not further want any fixation of times, and which will, so to speak, spread out the "Sunday-feeling" over all the days of the week. Of course that means very often a liberal interpretation of rules, for in this new stage of religious consciousness it is realized that "the Sabbath is made for man and not man for the Sabbath."

Now when we ask for the special circumstances in which such a feeling of independence of hallowed places and days may arise, we can say that this may be chiefly in those epochs which we call "late" or "decadent." Oswald Spengler[1] has introduced the idea of cultures growing old and entering a stereotyped decadent epoch. Let us get rid of the moral point of view which is taken in Spengler's evolution scheme, and regard only the historical facts which he and others have pointed out. That is, instead of speaking of the typical characteristics of decadent or dying periods, let us try to explore, without valuation, contemporary ideas (because cultures are never really dying but only developing, being in transition from one state to another).

[1] Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, A. A. Knopf, 1939.

Thus we can see that after a period where men have built forms and made rules and established ceremonies, moral principles and fixed attitudes of life, there will always follow a reaction when those forms are broken again, perhaps because they have been overdone and thus have become demonic instead of helpful. Whenever a generation of mankind has sought for symbols or names of that great power which lies behind all striving, and has succeeded in formulating its idea of God, the next generations will certainly repeat those names again and again, until they are quite worn out, like old coins which are passed from one hand to another—without much reflection—until at last nobody can read the text written on them. They are often still current centuries later, but they have no more real meaning, and there will come a day when people will become aware of their meaninglessness and abolish them. Such people would rather live without any names and ideas of God than have outworn and false names. They realize that former names are now bad, and they think therefore that it may be better not to seek for names at all. It is the task of names to connect and thus to help to an understanding, and now the names have only the power of separating.

This experience is the starting-point of the *Religion of Non-religion*. In its further progress it leads always to the attempt to find *new names for God* which are not yet outworn, and which cannot mean a separation from Him. We shall first regard the iconoclastic side of this process, and ask ourselves about the various feelings which work together in the destruction of demonic hierarchical systems, in the overtiredness of all special religious forms and rules.

First of all, as soon as the human spirit realizes that God cannot be this or that special thing, but that His power and His spirit lives in everything and everywhere, there will arise a *pantheistic* feeling, thus overcoming the demonism of polytheism. There arises a feeling such as St. Paul describes in Acts 17.28 when he says: "In Him we live and move and have our being," because we feel then that we certainly do not live or move or have our being in anything else than God, who is one and all.

This pantheism leads further to a certain *mysticism* which means here that the limits between the ego and its opposites,

such as the cosmos or God, are wiped out, and one all-combining feeling of community spreads over the entire universe. Lévy-Brühl calls it "mystical participation." As this mysticism has arisen from an overcoming of all names and symbols and contents of the Absolute, it will here be an *abstract* mysticism, which allows no pictures at all as a possible description of that which is meant. These abstractions are connected with a *neuter* formulation of the holy being. God cannot be defined as being male or female, or as a personality, but only as impersonal and general forces, and waves of spirit.

At last we may see that the overtiredness of so many religious symbols and expressions leads always to a *psychological inversion* in religious life (as we may see it in St. Augustine). That is, what has been treated in the past as a reality standing before men, becomes now an inner reality to the mind. To put it in one sentence: The background of any religion of non-religion, which leads always to the conception of new names for God, can be seen in a pantheistic feeling of mystic all-oneness which is formulated in an abstract and quite neutral way, and which means a psychological inversion of former ideas of some objective reality.

Looking back in history to the building process of our own thought, we can see that mediaeval mysticism, such as that of Meister Eckhardt, depends largely on the ancient ideas of Neoplatonism. Plotinos, the center of this school, who lived in the 3rd century A.D., is very anxious in his scriptures, the Enneades, to avoid all names of God, because he thinks that those names will only diminish the real greatness of the all-embracing power. So he says we must withdraw from all forms and colours in order to find God. We must shut our senses against all experiences and sensations in order to become aware of Him, who is beyond all expressions of earthly life. Thus, when we try to speak about God in our ordinary language, we can only say that He is not this and not that, because everything which we can express is a worldly fact and therefore surely not God. It would be a diminution of God to call Him good, because He is much more than any goodness that we can conceive, because He is perfect. It would even be quite wrong to speak of Him as something being, and therefore Plotinos prefers to call Him non-being and to give Him only negative names. Hereby

Plotinos became the founder of the so-called "negative theology" of the Christian church.

Such negative theologians can be found in every age until today, when Karl Barth and his followers, the so-called dialectical theologians, again stress the difference between God and man, God and world, very strongly. These men feel quite sure that all expressions of religious feelings cannot be adequate to the majesty of God, and that we are by no means moving away from the earth when we are talking about religious facts, but only moving around ourselves. Therefore they do not want "religion," and by this they come very near to the standpoint which we have called the Religion of Non-religion.

The ideas of Plotinos go back to the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria, who combined the central ideas of the Greek philosophy, especially of Platonism, with the monotheism of Israel. But this monotheism means also an attempt to abolish the too many gods of still earlier ages. When Abraham first conceived the idea of one single God called Jahweh, he wiped away at the same time all the special characteristics and attributes which had been connected with the nature-gods and demons before. He overcame the various religious feelings and ceremonies of his people in order to establish a new God who was elevated over all the symbolic forms of the other peoples around. Even his name—Jahweh—should not be pronounced, because he is above the level where names have any meaning. And in later historical times Moses renewed this religion. Sigmund Freud tells us[1] that Moses was not a Jew, but an Egyptian nobleman, who must have been quite a revolutionary thus to lead away a great foreign people. If this really were so, Moses did nothing but keep in line with the great Egyptian reform movements. He did just what a few centuries before Amenhotep IV had done, when he abolished by an act of law all the different gods which had ruled over Egypt since ancient times, and replaced them all by one single God called Aton; he also changed his own name to Ich-en-Aton, which means son of this new god Aton. These Egyptian attempts to establish a monotheistic religion, can be compared in their real meaning to what in later periods and other realms of historical development

[1] Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, A. A. Knopf, New York, 1939.

have appeared as the different dawns of a Religion of Non-religion.

The difference between monotheism and the religion of non-religion is founded chiefly on the different historical circumstances of their origin. For while the religion of non-religion is always "late," and connected with all the typical characteristics of a later period of culture which we have mentioned before, monotheism is never mystical, never neuter, but personal; never abstract and only seldom psychologically turned backwards and inwards. And in those times when monotheism arises, man is really "made in the image of God." But man does not feel himself to be a model of God in those other times when the idea of a religion of no religion is strong.

Yet there is some connection. For monotheism, carried to its conclusion, might really be a religion of non-religion, because there could be no so-called "religious life," no ceremonies, neither in ritual nor in ordinary life of any kind, without some kind of *opposition*, and thus giving room for devils and demons. Of course those negative powers are always pushed into the background and hidden in any monotheistic religion, yet they give it its vitality. We may say that every vital monotheism is in some way a veiled dualism, and we can see this fact very clearly in the Jewish and Christian religion. In both systems the pretension of having abolished all demonic opposition is only the expression of a desire, and never, of course, of a real fact.

The idea of a personal God always involves the idea of something opposite, which is not God, and thus gives *life to* religion. Nowhere in western countries has *this life* ever been lost as it has been in the East, where Buddhism in its later stages of Mahayana came together with the old Chinese philosophy of Taoism and thus developed the Zen system, which still has its teachers and monasteries in Japan. Zen is by no means a religion *like other* religions which are full of that vitality which a struggle of opposing powers provides. Zen means the complete overcoming of all religious ideas and special religious actions. Therefore it is the prototype of a religion of no religion.

Of course such a system could never arise in the West, because until this day—or one might say until yesterday—the West could only accept the idea of a God being a personality. To

develop human individuality to the utmost degree and to think about the feeling of Personal Being as the highest possibility of mankind, has certainly been the chief task of Western cultures. This, of course, is the special Western opinion, and seen from the East it means an over-estimation and over-doing of the experiences of our waking state. When today the psychologists speak about the Unconscious and regard dreams and phantasies seriously, this is really an heretic act, for it means the breaking with a tradition which is indeed very old in the West. Now suddenly, human reason as the highest point of our waking state, has been dethroned from its former position, and has become only a periodical wave on the ocean of sub-conscious life, arising for a short time and being reabsorbed afterwards—individual life as a whirligig on the surface of a deep ocean. This symbol is new only in Western countries; it is a very old idea in the East.

Zen therefore means more to us than a mere teaching of some strange ideas which do not concern our own life at all, for we feel touched by it much more strongly than people in former times. Let us now try to explore the language of Zen-Buddhism, which can indeed be regarded as a prototype of a religion of non-religion and as a clear illustration of its chief points. The different attempts in this direction in the West, which we have considered here, are only an abolishing of special forms, names and ceremonies, replacing them at the same time by other new forms. Zen took the final step by overcoming forms as such, which are all hindrances on the way to a realization of Truth. It has gone to the basic principle of this need and laughs at all the attempts of mankind to formulate the highest truth in terms of our language or even in thoughts and ideas. First of all there is no need for seeking salvation because the soul is already free and saved, and even more—the soul has never been unfree. To think so is only an error, an illusion.

This is an idea which we already find in the old Vedanta philosophy of India. Here it is taught that the Atman as the inner and higher Self has been free in eternity, and we need only to solve the illusion of *avidya*, (ignorance), to realize this fact. But Zen goes much further still. The Zen master Hakuin says: "This very earth is the Lotus-land of Purity, and this body is

the body of Buddha." Does this not remind one of John Quincy Adams' hymn "Heaven is here"?[1]

This in turn may be compared to a poem of the Sufi mystic Kabir who lets God say to him:

O servant, where dost thou seek Me?
Lo! I am beside thee.
I am neither in temple nor in mosque:
I am neither in Kaaba nor in Kailash:
Neither am I in rites and ceremonies, nor in Yoga
and renunciation.
If thou art a true seeker, thou shalt at once see Me:
thou shalt meet Me in a moment of time.
Kabir says, "O Sadhu! God is the breath of all
breath.[2]

Thus there is no need to change anything in life, not even to put away an illusion, because there is no such difference between right and wrong, enlightenment or error. It is useless to strive for holiness and truth, because this very striving and yearning and seeking would be without a real object, for there is nowhere any holiness which could be divided from mere secular life or unholiness.

The Sufis talk in their psalms about this overcoming of the difference in such a way that they call it a future achievement to which we have to strive:

Not until every mosque beneath the sun
Lies ruined, will our holy work be done;
And never will true Musalman appear
Till faith and infidelity are one.[3]

When in the 6th century A.D. the Emperor Wu asked Bodhidharma, who introduced the Zen doctrine into China, about the holy truth and about the first principle, i.e. the quintessence of religion, Bodhidharma answered in a rather surprising, thought-provoking way: "That principle exists in everything There is nothing holy."

[1] Hymn by John Quincy Adams, in the American Hymnal, No. 505.

[2] A saying by the Persian mystic Abu Sa'id ibn Abi'l-Khayr, quoted in Nicholson, *Mystics of Islam*, p. 90.

[3] Quoted from *Lyra Mystica*, ed. by C. C. Albertson, MacMillan Co., New York, 1932, p. 52.

The Zen masters have always tried to express in paradox or even in gestures alone, this fact of non-differentiation between holiness and secular life. A Zen master was asked: "What is Enlightenment?" And he answered: "Your everyday thoughts." Another one who was asked about the Tao, which is the very principle of Truth and the highest idea of Chinese religion, answered only: "Usual life is the very Tao." Thus every thought and every deed which could be called a religious one is in fact meaningless, and by this the Zen masters have created an attitude which can only be called a religion of non-religion.

This super-religion is based on the mystical idea of the oneness of all things with the transcendental Body of Truth, which is called the Eternal Buddha. Other people have called it the World-Soul or God. The Zen master Hakuin has expressed it thus in this famous poem:

All beings are from the very beginning the Buddhas
It is like ice and water:
Apart from water no ice can exist.
Outside sentient beings, where do we seek the
Buddha?
Not knowing how near Truth is,
People seek it far away . . .
They are like him who, in the midst of water,
Cries imploringly for a drink.[1]

Surely if we are thus always in the midst of Truth and Holiness, we could only separate ourselves from it if we would do something in special search for it. There can be no aim for him who has already attained it; he only needs to follow on the path he is treading. Santayana must have something very similar in mind when he says:

> If, then, contemplation of pure Being ever becomes the last secret of a religious life, it does so only when religion is transformed into a purely intellectual and sacrificial discipline. Positively religion or moral feelings then drop into their very small, very human places. Where otherwise would be the transforming force, the sublimity and sure finality, of this insight! No fond eulogistic words such as "high," "deep," "living," "spiritual," "truth," patter any longer about it; they have lost their afflatus and their contraries have lost their sting.[2]

[1] A similar translation may be found in the *Bible of the World*, p. 265.
[2] George Santayana, *Realm of Essence*, p. 63.

The Zen master Chao-chou was asked by a monk: "How can one accord with Tao?" The answer followed: "If you try to accord with it, you will get away from it!"[1] We may say that the only ceremony of Zen is to have no ceremonies at all, and its only rule of life is to do nothing expressly for Zen, for religion, but only to go on and on and on. The only ethical law which has been formulated by Zen masters is the very short formula: "Walk on." That is to say, go on with your usual occupation, and do not try to do something better or more religious or more Zen-like.

But there is still another idea. In the film "Lost Horizon" which is based on James Hilton's famous novel of the same name, the representative of the spirit of the secret and sacred landscape, Shangri-la, tries to explain why people live there so happily, and keep so young for a long time, even for centuries, saying: "We always try to avoid any exaggeration, and even any exaggeration in avoiding it." In the same way the Zen masters teach us never to be afraid of our own incompleteness, and not even of the incompleteness of striving for completeness. "Drop it" is the only advice we can get from a Zen master when we are troubled about anything. And to "go on" is always the next thing to do.

William Ernest Hocking also has discovered that religion is the source of alienation from the world, as well as its remedy. He writes: "Religion is often described as the healing of an alienation which has opened between man and his world: this is true; but we may not forget that it is religion which has

[1] This tale is recorded in a similar way in the Chinese book *Mu-Mon-Kwan* of the 13th century, translated by Nyogen Senzaki and Saladin Reps, under the title "The Gateless Gate," John Murray, Los Angeles, 1934, XIX, p. 33.

Jo-Shu asked Nan-Sen: What is the path?
Nan-Sen said: Everyday life is the path.
Jo-Shu asked: Can it be studied?
Nan-Sen said: If you try to study you will be far away from it.
Jo-Shu asked: If I do not study how can I know it is the path?
Nan-Sen said: The path does not belong to the perception world, neither does it belong to the non-perception world. Cognition is a delusion and non-cognition is senseless. If you want to reach the true path beyond doubt, place yourself in the same freedom as sky. You name it neither good nor not good.

Jo-Shu at these words was enlightened.

brought about that alienation. *Religion is the healing of a breach which religion itself has made*."[1]

Now we ask ourselves what the boy, of whom we spoke in the beginning of this chapter, should do when he is suddenly shocked by the church building which pretends to be a special place of holiness. He feels this to be a direct opposition to the reality of the holiness of nature around. Then we must tell him that from the Zen point of view he should drop this trouble and go on further with his mystical promenade. Maybe it would be still better for him even to drop the mysticism and only take his walk in quite a meaningless way. There is one philosopher today, Martin Heidegger, who would go one step further and tell this young boy to even stop his walk, and instead of such an act of reflection, do some daily work. For nature can only be experienced in its reality, when it is not looked at, but wanted and used. I mention this philosopher because there is an element of the Zen-like religion of non-religion in his teachings, in spite of some strong feeling for the necessity of work and labour, which is of course quite the contrary to the free attitude of the super-religious feeling here described.

Let us summarize briefly the chief doctrines of Zen in so far as it is interesting for us as a religion of non-religion. The mystical idea of the all-penetrating Buddha-spirit of Enlightenment leads to the identity of the holy and the secular plane of life. From this follows the non-necessity of striving for anything which could be more Buddha-like or more Tao-like. Also the avoidance of special religious acts should *not* be done in an exaggerated manner, and the only commandment which can be given is to go on in your usual way of life.

Now we come to our last question and ask about any signs of the religion of no religion in our own day and in the West. If we examine the books of the various schools which can be summarized under the name "Psychoanalysis," we shall find Zen occasionally mentioned, in most cases without further explanation. Why is this done? Psychoanalysis and Zen have one important point in common. They are both wholly unafraid of any state of opposition. They both dislike particularity and repression of anything which militates against any form of life.

[1] William Ernest Hocking, *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, Yale University Press, 1912, p. 238.

Thus we can see that psychoanalysts are not very fond of St. Michael, because he fights and slays the dragon of some desired passion, instead of loving it. They do not like this attitude of St. Michael, which they call a dangerous method of repression. They think that the dragon-passion should not be rejected but carried out in order to overcome it later in a much safer way—perhaps even exaggerating it and thus losing one's interest in it. Besides, these passions are not as bad as they look, because they are merely the only possible expression of the momentary state of the soul which is directed by them.

To give a few typical examples of this attitude of some psychoanalysts, which is apt to lead to a religion of non-religion, one might mention the book "War Dance" by Graham Howe, the well-known psychoanalyst practising in London. Here it is pointed out that this awful and detested attitude of repressing the opposition of every ideal must certainly lead to war. We cannot live without our opposites, and granting this fact would be the only guarantee for peace. But he who tries to hold fast to one single idea and does not want to be changed in his attitude, will soon have to fight against the necessity of movement and alteration of every fact. He who tries to stand fast in some anxious and forceful pacifism will surely have war after a short time. For life means change and means going on; it is not a fixation of anything, even if that would be the high idea of peace or the even higher idea of holiness.

In quite the same way Philip Metman demonstrates in his book about myth and destiny,[1] how the myths about the ancient astral gods always point to the necessity of living up to the demands of the moment. No one can hold forever to a beloved and agreeable situation, while life goes on and leads him to some other tasks. Here demonism is defined as the untimely desire for power and enjoyment for the sake of some fancy, to the detriment of one's own and others' Real selves.

Similarly Heinrich Zimmer in his book Maya,[2] which deals with the symbolism[3] of the Indian purana-myths, proves that all

[1] P. Metman, *Mythos und Schicksal*, Leipzig Bibliographisches Institut, 1936.

[2] Heinrich Zimmer, *Maya der Indische Mythos*, Deutsche Verlags Anstalt, 1946.

[3] Alan Watts, *Behold the Spirit*, Philos. Library, 1947, shows boldly, that this basic message of the religion of no-religion constitutes equally the essence of Christianity. Compare also his *Myth's and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*, Pantheon Press, 1946.

ZEN-MONK TEARING BUDDHIST SCRIPTURE

After a painting by Liang-Kai

these new ideas about life in modern psychology have long been pointed out in a symbolical way in the old Indian stories of the peril and downfall of all those mighty demons, who tried to stop the flow of life in order to eternalize their power and reign. "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it;"[1] for change alone is the secret of life and success, and that means obedience to the laws of motion and alteration, and also to the laws of fading and death.

Modern psychoanalysis of course, is not a religion of no religion as is Zen-Buddhism. Zen means the complete agreement with any shape of life, and to go on by all means. It means realization of all the different and changing directions of life, and it means not to be afraid of any aspect of life, not even of your own afraidness! But the examples of modern psychology just shown prove that this utmost point of a religion of no-religion has not been reached in the modern Western world, in spite of its eager desire to come to such an attitude.

Psychoanalysis agrees with Zen in so far as the demons of opposition are no more fought, but admitted as a very necessary supplement of our own present attitude to life. The dragon which is slain by St. Michael shall not be slain again; it may live and complete our strength. But there has arisen now a new demon which is not at all beloved by the new psychologists. This new demon or devil is St. Michael himself! For his very attitude, which will not allow the opposites to grow and live, is hated and detested by modern psychologists. They are not at all impartial in this struggle of forces. But a religion of no-religion is perfect only if there is not any fear of religion.

In conclusion, we have seen different points in which Zen-Buddhism and certain modern psychological movements in the West are obviously compatible with each other. If we distil the quintessential elements of these compatibilities, we may say that in both systems the tendency prevails to get rid of all conscious forms of religious life in order to establish this very life on a much deeper plane, which today is generally called the Unconscious. Even in Sufism we can find an analogy to these views. Bayazid says "it is a crime in the lover to regard his love and an outrage in love to look at one's own seeking while one is face to face with the Sought."[2]

[1] Luke 17:33.

[2] Quoted in Nicholson, p. 115.

The Religion of No-Religion

Only in so far as the unconscious world is reflected and considered in conscious thought, may it again be called a religion. It is what we have baptized the Religion of No-religion.[1]

[1] Passages of this chapter appeared in an earlier version in periodical *Buddhism in England*, and also in pamphlet published by the Buddhist Lodge, London, 1938.

CHAPTER THREE

IN SEARCH OF A MEANING TO LIFE

Who says 'Buddha' but once has to wash
his mouth continually for three years.

1. RITUALS OF ICONOCLASM

ICONOCLASM TRIES TO OVERCOME all rituals—and yet is a ritual itself! Even by destroying and abolishing all symbols, all exceptional places within life which would be especially revealing spots, we create a new cult, a new practice which feels itself to be closer to Divine Truth than simple worship. Non-Religion overcomes Religion; non-talking about the Divine seems to be closer to its essence than any names and dogmatical statements about it could be.

A close parallel to these tendencies can be found in modern Surrealist art. Surrealists do not speak a language to give expression to their feelings, at any rate they do not speak an intelligible language. They feel too distinctly that, as Breton says, "not all the waters in the sea would suffice to wash out one drop of intellectual blood."[1] They merely shriek those feelings and they do that very often in quite an inarticulate manner. Indeed, this crying can be understood literally. The Surrealists of today are joined by the so-called Da-daists who flourished thirty years ago. How could this have occurred? Da-daism in the realm of aesthetics has somehow the same meaning as a negative theology has in religion. There it is stated that God cannot be approached by any words in human language or in the human understanding; here in Da-daism it is realized that there can be no approach to any reality other than by merely touching it and by prompt reaction of our instinct. The word "dog" is already far away from the object we wish to describe. Bow-wow would be much closer, but the only real approach can be seen in the expressions of very tiny children who are not able to use even

[1] Andre Breton, *What is Surrealism*, Faber & Faber, London, 1936.

such names, but who merely point to the things with their fingers, calling them Da-da.

This theory is the origin of Da-daism, which by the way, existed even in Greek antiquity, with Plato's teacher Kratylos. He had learned from Heraclitus that nobody could step twice into the same river because the water is ever-changing. Kratylos, however, became bewildered in thinking out the consequences of this, and made the statement that one could not even step once into the same river because there is not any meaning in the expression "same." Aristotle ridiculed Kratylos by saying that in the end he dared make no statements whatsoever, resorting finally to merely pointing with his finger.

A Zen-Buddhist song of the 7th century expresses the same idea:

Wordiness and intellection—
The more with them the further astray we go;
Away therefore with wordiness and intellection,
And there is no place where we cannot pass freely.[1]

Along these lines Zen-Buddhism even developed an educational practice which avoided all reasoning and all talking. The famous patriarch Rinsai usually did not answer a religious question with words of human language, but simply uttered a roaring cry "Kwatsu," which in its origin meant to scold or to cry loudly. In Zen-Buddhism this cry refers to the Absolute, because all relativity of reasoning necessarily is removed in such a meaningless roar.

Another parellel to Da-daism, ancient and modern, is recorded in the way in which an Indian Buddhist Abbot, Maha-Sangharakkita, on his death-bed announced his attainment of holiness through a snap of the fingers.[2] Similarly, the Islamic Sufist doctrine of Tarawwuf, according to the Mystic Khaja, was taught by signs.

And finally we can find Da-daism in the oldest document of human literature—in the Rig-Veda. In one of the most important hymns of this book (Rig-Veda X, 129),[3] the creation of the world, or better, its coming into existence, is described. The real reason for this evolution is seen behind what we call Being

[1] *Bible of the World*, p. 355.
[2] Visuddhi-Maggi, par. 48.
[3] *Bible of the World*, p 3.

or Non-Being. Before this state of Being came into birth, before Heaven and Earth and all the Gods had any being, and even before there could be any Non-Being, there was something which can only be called the "Tat." The Gods are later than the Tat. B. Heimann translates the passage "The Gods are later. They are on this, the empirical side of the world," and adds: "Thus India states a problem, and answers it in a very strange way, which in the Occident cannot even be raised, since it is against our Western presuppositions about God's uniqueness and supremacy, to search for His origin, for the source of the Supreme Reality itself."[1]

The Rig-Veda hymn is thus a song to the unborn and undirected background of all possible Creation, and its language can well be called a religious Da-daism. But in all these instances the fact is overlooked that taciturnity may be just as revealing an attitude as eloquence. We may in this connection think of the frequently repeated joke that this or that learned individual knew how to be silent in many languages! The Buddha once said: "I have preached for forty-five years about the Truth and yet I haven't spoken a word about it." And Confucius said: "I wouldn't like to talk any more because the Heaven is silent in ordering the course of the four seasons and in feeding and nursing all creatures."

In other words, whatever we do becomes necessarily an expression of our inner attitude—to act is a revealing gesture, but so is the avoidance of action. To cry and to scold is an obvious reaction against unwanted events, but it affords only a slightly subtler psychological approach to find out that to keep smiling in face of such events is just as strong a reaction, and reveals the will to repress or to overcome an antagonistic feeling. "For no one ever, even for a moment, remains without doing action," says God Krishna to his royal pupil.[2] Even by breathing, says the Hindu doctrine, we are constantly murmuring a strong spell, a Mantra, which may be world-creating or world-destroying.

Thus, just as silence may be talkative, or as outer quietude may reveal inner restlessness, so can the stressed avoidance of religious activities and services be understood as being a strange

[1] Betty Heimann, *Indian and Western Philosophy—A Study in Contrasts*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1937, p. 43.

[2] Bhagavadgita, III, p. 5.

manner of worship itself. Even if one tries expressly to avoid any visible reaction to the burning awareness of the miracle of Being, one is bound to develop, at least subconsciously, a new attitude toward Life. One may of course try to analyze all such inner changes, to uproot them and get rid of them in order not to establish any borders which might fix and restrict the realm of Life's underlying wonder. But the more one tries, the deeper and subtler become the unwanted reactions and restrictions.

The problem of how to overcome worship as well as iconoclasm, religion as well as non-religion, has become serious only on a rather high plane of meditative development. We are dealing here with one of the very last difficulties of religious life which, as the Tibetan precept of the Gurus[1] says, should not be confused with those difficulties which may arise in the early stages; the later stages are veiled from the understanding of those still lingering on the earlier ones, and the idea of many prophets has been that it would only harm a simple, undeveloped mind to be immediately confronted with God's last secrets. Typical for this attitude is the following story recorded from the life of the Persian Sufi Khurqani, who lived around 1000 A.D.:

One night, while he was praying, he heard a voice cry, "Ha! Abu'l-Hasan! Dost thou wish Me to tell the people what I know of thee, that they may stone thee to death?" "O Lord God," he replied, "dost Thou wish me to tell the people what I know of Thy mercy and what I perceive of Thy grace, that none of them may ever again bow to Thee in prayer?" The voice answered, "Keep thy secret, and I will keep Mine."[2]

Nothing can be done or thought of in relation to the underlying essence of our existence without our becoming involved in great difficulties as far as pure expression is concerned. It is necessarily so. One of these difficulties is to be seen in the doubt whether it should be necessary at all to fight something which has no meaning and importance anyhow. That is to say, if the miracle of Being is omnipresent and unlimited in its power, why should we bother about, and try to avoid, positive or negative

[1] *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrine*, ed. by W. Y. Evans-Wentz, Oxford University Press, London, 1935, p. 78.

[2] Nicholson, p. 136.

religious practices which obviously cannot do any real harm, since they are just as unable to restrict Divine Power as they are to strengthen it. "If all phenomena be known to be illusory, no need is there to seek or to reject anything."[1]

Confucianism in its careful way of keeping to the middle road in everything, teaches us that we should avoid any over-doing of worship, just as much as any neglect of it. In Zen-Buddhism we find this symbolic tale:

> One winter night Tan-hsia took shelter in a temple, and finding that the fire was going out he took down one of the wooden figures of the Buddha from the altar and placed it on the embers. When the keeper of the temple discovered what had been done he was furious at such an act of sacrilege and began to scold Tan-hsia for his irreverence. But Tan-hsia merely scratched about among the ashes, remarking, "I am trying to get the essence of Buddhahood out of the burnt ashes."
>
> "How," asked the keeper scornfully, "can you expect to get the essence of Buddhahood from a wooden statue?"
>
> "If there is no essence of Buddahood," replied Tan-hsia, "this is certainly not a Buddha, and I am committing no sacrilege. May I have the two remaining Buddhas for my fire?"

There is no use in worshipping something in which we do not believe, nor would there be any use in destroying it. A Zen monk who was approaching his teacher constantly with a question of how to develop the right attitude of overcoming all reason, thought and reflection about the Absolute by clinging to what he called "Non-idea," received the angry answer, "Oh, go away and drop that silly idea of 'Non-idea' of yours."

In the same way someone might come along and ask us to drop that religion of Non-religion, and in fact, even to drop any special attitude of God-awareness. In the very moment when the iconoclast discovers that he still believes one attitude to be holier than another, he has to drop that very attitude in order to make holiness prevail throughout. That makes religious iconoclasm an attitude of constant self criticism and of constant renewal. It is like running behind one's own shadow, persecuting one's self for a constant falling short of the last wisdom, and for clinging to incomplete half-truth achievement. As soon as he discovers his own momentary worship-practice the iconoclast, of course, is willing and eager to break away from it, only to

[1] *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrine*, p. 89.

establish in this departure a new kind of worship-practice, which he will now perform until he has become aware of the insufficiency of that newly acquired non-practice also.

Thus not only religion, but life as such, is eternally going on only because the majority of its impulses remains forever undiscovered. It seems to be a biological necessity that most of our bodily and mental processes should proceed unconsciously, and thus remain an unrecognized matter of course. In those fields where it does arise, conscious awareness causes disorder and death. Yet we choose this way. In religion this means that since the dialectical process of growing awareness and overcoming of all limiting dogmas and rituals has once begun, we are neither willing nor able to stop it, but feel that history has to go on in an overcoming of more and more and ever more idols and other religious restrictions.

Only because we are unable to detect our own ways of religious feeling, as long as they are taken for granted, do we remain religious personalities. T. S. Eliot must have felt somewhat like this when he confesses, "I dare say that a detached critic could find an equally rich vein of error in my own writings. If such error is there, I am probably the last person to be able to detect it."[1]

Eventually the iconoclast considers it a sin to cling to a certain feeling or mood which is connected with the realization of universal holiness, because such a feeling necessarily means at least a psychological restriction, and thus a limitation of holiness.

Tibetan Buddhism has reached a stage where it gives us absolution, even for this last sin, by recognizing the fact that each stage of development is evidence of all-embracing holiness, which reveals itself through everything without exception, whether it be worship or iconoclasm, devotion or analysis.

"Poison and antidote are identical,"—that is the essence of the Tibetan tale of the Yogi Ghantapada. After the Yogi has constantly refused to visit the King, the King orders a courtesan to seduce him. She sends her daughter who succeeds in the course of time. Later the King meets the Saint who is wandering about with wife, child and whiskey bottle. The King ridicules him, but then Ghantapada throws child and bottle on the

[1] T. S. Eliot, *After Strange Gods*, p. 10.

earth, which opens up. The child becomes a thunderbolt, the whiskey bottle a prayer bell. He himself becomes Samwara, the Highest Lord, and his wife his Shakti, or creative energy.[1]

While the King had tried to deceive the Saint with means that he considered profane, the Saint had used and enjoyed just these profane things thoroughly, being aware all the time of their indwelling holiness. As a further explanation of this tale, we may add the answer which Bodhidharma gave to the Emperor Wu of Ljo to the question "Where can the essential meaning of Holy Truth be found?" He said "In the immediate presence of boundless Unholiness."

What here and there in Buddhism thus became evident in a rather subtle way, has sometimes taken vigorous forms in the Western world—the iconoclasts of the early Reformation time went about burning and plundering monasteries, violating nuns, smashing stained-glass windows, pictures, and singing songs of destruction. This kind of outrageous iconoclasm may still be called a religion of non-religion as long as it is done with the express motive of breaking laws for God's sake and not for pleasure's sake, but as soon as the essentials are forgotten through the violence of such a practice, of course there is nothing religious left in it, and the proceeding becomes merely atheistic.

2. ICONOCLASM IS NOT ATHEISM

Heartily know,
When half-gods go,
The gods arrive.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

RELIGION IS THE acknowledgment of the fact of Life's miraculousness in certain places, here and there. Religion of Non-religion, on the other hand, is the realization of the unrestrictedness of this miracle, and therefore an abandoning of all fixations and limiting statements about it. He who has entered into this super-religious state no longer believes in a system of theolog-

[1] Grünwedel, No. 52.

ical knowledge, and suspects every claim which is made in this direction.

Atheism, however, is the denial of the fact of the miracle of Being; it is an attempt to build up a system of world understanding which takes life as a mere matter of course. Atheism tries to explain every part of existence out of other parts, without ever allowing the question about meaning and essence of existence in itself. Thus atheism reveals as its own background a non-realization of the most basic reality, a disregard of a Fact which is more real than any of the so-called facts in all science.

But this self-centered attitude of mere secularism is taken today for wisdom. The I-know-everything men are regarded as representatives of mankind's highest mental achievements and those humble souls who do not dare to speak up in face of the inconceivable greatness of the fact of existence, are ridiculed.

This shows that Socrates has been forgotten, and even his famous statement about the wisdom of not knowing is quoted only as an antique torso, head off, so that it sounds paradoxical and queer. "I know that I know nothing" is not all that Socrates said. The continuation of this saying, which we always skip nowadays, is much more important—"therefore I am so much wiser than those who think they know everything."

Atheists believe that they know, and so does the religious confessor; they are both wrong. Religion as well as Unreligion is not a matter of knowledge, but of faith or belief. Unfortunately these words have been greatly misemployed or abused throughout the ages. We use the word "To believe" wherever we want to express something insecure in everyday life. We "Believe" that it is going to rain tomorrow. That means, we figure it to be likely to happen, though of course, nobody can tell and it may well be that our prediction will prove to be wrong.

By applying the same word "believe" to religious subjects we transfer willy-nilly that psychological feeling of insecurity and guesswork to religious matters. This is quite incorrect, as the mystery of existence, on the contrary, is something much more secure than anything we could possibly state about single facts within existence. The expression "to believe" should have been preserved only for this super-sureness of immediate insight, or else, as things stand today, one should refrain altogether from using this deteriorated word in religious language.

As the formula "we believe in God" has been thus burdened with entirely wrong associations, we had better talk about our awareness of the miraculous character underlying all being.

Atheism has only occurred as an ephemeral blindness. No great thinker has ever taught it and when we look through the history of philosophy we will find that most philosophers have rejected the atheistic attitude.

Already Plato had found the right way of characterizing atheism. In one of his Dialogues,[1] an Athenian says that the new atheism in Athens, is due "to a certain very grievous sort of ignorance which nevertheless wears the appearance of being the greatest wisdom."

Somewhat later Epicurus changes the meaning of the expression atheism when he states that it can only be blamed on the people who are falsifying true worship, and not on the philosophers who rightly fight against such a practice. "It is not profane to deny the existence of the deities of the vulgar; but to apply to the deities the received notions of the vulgar is profane."

Cicero goes even one step farther. He does not believe that there ever existed any real atheism when he says about the gods, "their characteristics vary—their existence is denied by none."[2]

Passing over to the Reformation we find Calvin saying that atheism is a kind of insanity, a mental disease which has overwhelmed mankind after the Fall, and is typical of the totally corrupted state of nature in which we find ourselves.

Francis Bacon in his famous Essay "Of Atheism," believes that such a standpoint, though frequently formulated, has not really been taken by man. He writes "it appeareth in nothing more, that atheism is rather in the lip than in the heart of man, than by this, that atheists will ever be talking of that their opinion, as if they fainted in it within themselves, and would be glad to be strengthened by the consent of others." (An excellent psychological observation about the underlying subconscious motives.) He continues: "Nay, more, you shall have atheists strive to get disciples, as it fareth with other sects; and, which is most of all, you shall have of them that will suffer for atheism, and not recant; whereas, if they did truly think that there were no such thing as God, why should they trouble themselves?"

[1] Plato *Laws*, 886a, b.

[2] Cicero *De Natura deorum*, 11, 5

Bacon means that the frequent martyrdom of atheists throughout history proves that it is a religion.

Such a lip-atheist in the Baconian sense certainly was the philosopher Fichte who reached the spotlight thru the so-called Atheism controversy. In fact, Fichte did nothing but stress the unsuitability of any personification of the divine mystery, of which he was more strongly aware than most philosophers of his time. He called God an "auxiliary symbol." In the elementary education of mankind it may be necessary to teach such things as the existence of a transcendent supernatural power. We must remember, however, that later on we will have to dispense with such elementary statements which have no truth in themselves. Fichte believes that only Catholicism regards symbolic expression as a final goal of religious life, while Protestantism can be defined as an attempt to start with symbol and then to dispense with it.

It is obvious, however, that Fichte in his later period is impelled to resort to a new Absolute behind the Ego which then can only be characterized as pure Being in the traditional way in which Christian metaphysics talks about God.

We close our brief survey of the history of philosophical criticism of atheism by quoting the psychologist C. G. Jung[1] who today calls atheism "a stupid error" quite in line with what we have stated before about its development in the human mind as a mental disease which might be described as spiritual blindness.

But let us not condemn if we wish not to be condemned! After all, there will be, as Tillich says, a justification of the doubter, no less than a justification of the sinner.

The atheistic confession that we are not nor will ever be able to step beyond the limits of our own world, here and now, is only another expression for the profession in God as the Absolute. As we have seen before, all religious dogmas, in the last analysis, express nothing but the underlying fact of life's mysteriousness. However positively religious dogmas may be expressed, their inner meaning is merely a confession of helplessness in the face of the great Mystery. Religious and atheistic formulas, while they are the same in their final meaning, yet are different in their emotional background. Honest atheistic

[1] C. G. Jung, *Psychology & Religion*, Yale University Press, 1938, p. 100.

formulas, insofar as they are a protest against abuses, may have a higher value than lifeless and merely conventional religious dogmas. They may be a challenge to a dying system of theology. As Tennyson says "There lives more faith in honest doubt, believe me, than in half the creeds."[1] Theology has often agreed that it needs this challenge. Lessing preferred insecurity and struggle for God to a definitely acquired knowledge of Him, sublime as it might be. If God were to offer me in His right hand, he says, all possible wisdom and final insight into metaphysical truth, and in His left hand a constant yearning to acquire Truth under the condition of never really getting it—I would gladly grasp His left hand and say "Give me the striving and struggling. The highest Truth is only for Thee."

Somewhat related to Lessing's romantic idea is the way in which theologians today occasionally stress the necessity of an adventurous character in religion. We find this expressed in the following sentences of Henry P. Van Dusen:

> A world in which God stood at the street-corners of Life so that none might miss Him would be a world in which religious belief would be equivalent to worldly wisdom; therefore, a world ill-suited for the adventure of true religion. To that degree our world must appear irrational.[2]

We find here a valuation of circumstances which as a rule are considered to be negative. In the course of our further investigation we shall meet frequently this kind of paradoxical reversal of values. As to the special problem of atheism, the most striking expression is found in Paul Tillich's words:

> The frustration of all attempts to overcome the separation of his finiteness from his infinity can drive man to self-contradictory affirmation of his finiteness over against his infinity. In practice this means cynicism, in theory skepticism. (The resignation of religion.) The frustration of all attempts to overcome the separation of his finiteness from his infinity and the breakdown of the self-affirmation of his finiteness can drive man to realize his existential nature. In doing so he has reached the end of his possibilities of his boundary-situation. In practice this means the experience of meaninglessness, in theory the experience of nothingness. (The ultimate threat of human existence.)

[1] Tennyson *In Memoriam* XCVI.

[2] Henry P. Van Dusen, *The Plain Man seeks for God*, Scribner's, New York, 1933, p. 202.

All these examples show us how utterly different the attitude of religious iconoclasm is from atheism. Theologians of a religion of non-religion have always been misunderstood as negativists. Yoka Daishi's answer to such ill-suited reproaches is "Let others speak ill of me, let others spite me."[1] He can say that because he is so sure of his ground.

3. THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

If thou appear untouch'd by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine.

W. WORDSWORTH

LESSING WAS IN favor of a life remote from the pleasure of possessing God. To long for something is better for our human nature than to own it.

This attitude of Lessing and of some of the Romanticists of Goethe's time has a certain similarity to a very strange feeling which we may discover occasionally in those thinkers and prophets whom we consider as following the path of religion of non-religion.

It has happened time and again that a religious professor has felt the necessity of overcoming his own religious enthusiasm and certainty, and has welcomed the situation of religious frustration. Such an attitude of course is quite unusual and it might not even be met with anywhere by a theologian who has dedicated his entire life to religious research. He might find in whole libraries nothing but expressions of appreciation for religious inspiration and only contempt or pity for its abandonment and lack.

Martin Luther for instance, was very much afraid of losing close contact with his God. He considered God-forgetfulness as the most important source of all sin. Like him, scores of mystics and non-mystics complain about their inability to preserve the awareness of Divine power in their lives.

Thus Erskine of Linlathen complains about the "awful silence of God" which he feels sometimes to be so oppressive when his heart is longing to hear in answer to its cry, some

[2] Yoka Daishi's *Song of Enlightenment*, Bible of the World, p. 359.

audible voice. He says "it has not always been silence to me. I have had one revelation: it is now, I am sorry to say, a matter of memory with me."[1]

This is the usual complaint of somebody who is going through a decisive change in his religious experience, a change from light to darkness, from clearness to cloudiness in his view of Eternity. And this change is generally taken as a regrettable event, as death to holy inspiration, as an end of the contact with the Absolute.

But just the exceptions to this rule interest us most in our investigations. The Sufi Jami tells us the story of a dervish who "was endowed with a great ecstasy in the contemplation of Unity and in the station of passing-away (fana). One day he began to weep and lament. On being asked by the Sheykh Shihab-uddin what ailed him he answered, 'Lo, I am debarred by plurality from the vision of Unity. I am rejected, and my former state—I cannot find it!' The Sheykh remarked that this was the prelude to the station of 'abiding' (baqa), and that his present state was higher and more sublime than the one which he was in before."[2]

But what does the Sufi mean by that? We can find at least a part of the answer to this question in the words which God spoke to St. Paul after his urgent prayer to be relieved of his sickness and suffering: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." (II Cor. 12, 9.)

That means a promotion of knowledge by contrast. Other religious observers have felt the same way as St. Paul. The mystic Suso complains about the insecurity of God's presence in the following words:

> To give myself to fasting, watching, and prayer, to suffer or abstain or avoid, in a word all the hardnesses of life seem when compared with Thy presence to have no irksomeness at all. My soul is bathed in radiance, truth, and sweetness, so that all its labors are forgotten. My heart delights itself in abundant sweet meditations, my tongue learns to speak of high things, my body is brisk and ready for any undertaking; whoever comes to ask my advice, takes back with him high counsels such as he desires to hear. In short, I seem to myself to have transcended the limits of time and space, and

[1] Wm. R. Inge, quoted in *Studies of English Mystics*, John Murray, London, 1921, p. 78.

[2] Nicholson, p. 166.

to be standing on the threshold of eternal bliss. *But who, O Lord, can secure for me, that I may be long in this state?* Alas, in a moment it is withdrawn from me; and for a long space again I am left as naked and destitute as if I had never experienced anything of the kind.

But God's Wisdom tells him: By no other way canst thou know the certainty of My presence better, than when I hide Myself from thy soul. Then at last thou knowest by experience what I am, and what thou art.

The enjoyment which we feel in religious inspirations a psychological condition of our worldly state and we should overcome it as a last hindrance to the realization of true holiness. Only when this joy stops can we be sure that our contact with the divine power is not just a result of our own wishful thinking.

It is this experience which St. John of the Cross, the great Spanish mystic of the 16th century, describes so elaborately in many years' meditations in his monastery, which are recorded in a large volume "The Dark Night of the Soul."

After the soul has lost its happiness in mystic union it is led from one realm of darkness into another, step by step, by which process it is purified of all remaining selfish motives in its search for God. It is quite useless to give here any quotations from that book. One simply has to read it thoroughly, chapter by chapter, and develop oneself slowly in the way prescribed by St. John, the careful soul-physician. His book is the most elaborate document of religion of non-religion to be found in the whole world literature.

Not until our soul has willingly renounced all those joys and satisfactions which are ordinarily connected with religious progress, may we be sure that it is God who is glorified through us and not any of our own ambitions. (Our only concern should be that *His Kingdom* should come, nothing else.) St. John sees only grave dangers in our enjoying the "gifts of spirit," in the attainment of prayer-fulfillment, in supernatural visions and inspirations. It is necessary that we renounce all temporal blessings, the good things in nature, even the moral good and supernatural gifts. And when God has guided us into the Dark Night we shall think that everything goes wrong, that we are backsliding and wasting our time. At last we reach a state where we shall even drop the desire to experience or to perceive God.

St. John's whole book is written as an interpretation of a symbolic poem, every line, and sometimes every word of which, is elaborately commented on. Though of course the poem without the explanations can provide only a very slight impression of the book's contents, it is quoted here:

On a dark night, kindled in love with yearnings—O happy chance!
I went forth without being observed, my house being now at rest.
In darkness and secure. By the secret ladder, disguised—O! happy chance—In darkness and in concealment, my house being now at rest.

In the happy night, in secret, when none saw me, nor I beheld aught, without light or guide, save that which burned in my heart.
This light guided me. More surely than the light of noonday to the place where he (well I knew who!) was awaiting me—A place where none appeared.

O night that guided me. O night more lovely than the dawn, O night that joint beloved with lover, lover transformed in the beloved!

Upon my flowery breast, kept holy for himself alone, there he stayed, sleeping and I caressed him. And the fanning of the cedars made a breeze.

The breeze blew from the turret as I parted his locks; with his gentle hand he wounded my neck—and caused all my senses to be suspended.

I remained, lost in oblivion; my face I reclined on the beloved. All ceased and I abandoned myself, leaving my cares forgotten among the lilies.[1]

St. John of the Cross is by no means the only Christian mystic who is conscious of the necessity of overcoming that stage of development in religion which usually is taken as its highest one.

A work of similar flavor from the 14th century is the English tract called the "Cloud of Unknowing." This cloud, says its anonymous author, is bound to veil our view into the infinite realm of holiness as soon as we have passed through certain preliminary stages in the religious life. It means important progress to be thus deprived of all those visions which in the beginning of mystic life we thought to be its essence and aim. In religious affairs it is better to be blind than to be seeing.

[1] Quoted from the translation of works of St. John of the Cross, by P. Silverio de santa Teresa, Burns, Oates & Washbourne, Ltd., London.

It is more profitable to the health of thy soul, more worthy in itself, and more pleasing to God and to all the saints and angels in heaven—yea! and more helpful to all thy friends, bodily and ghostly, quick and dead—such a blind stirring of love unto God for himself, and such a secret setting upon this cloud of unknowing, and thou wert better to have it and to feel it in thine affection ghostly, than to have the eyes of thy soul opened in contemplation or beholding of all the angels or saints in heaven, or in hearing of all the mirth and melody that is among them in bliss.[1]

Anti-mystics have frequently blamed the mystics for making the relationship of man to God appear too sweet and too enjoyable, but the reports of those deepest of all mystics just quoted make it clear that this reproach is not always true. On the contrary, they suspect those enjoyable experiences of God's presence themselves. To feel truly the omnipresence of the divine, its power would have to penetrate not only our joys but also the realm of darkness and suffering. While the first approach to the mystery of "being" might have the sensational character of positive feeling and of enlightenment, further progress in our awareness of holiness is bound to touch fields in our consciousness where troubles and grave sorrows are provoked.

It is recorded as a general experience in Buddistic meditation exercises that during the striving for Samadhi, holy enlightenment, one is inclined to fall back again and again from the higher third stage of neutral considerations into the more elementary second stage where all the joys of the new life in spirit were first experienced. Thus we slide back from higher to lower achievements because we do not want to miss the pleasures which are connected with the earlier stages, just as the calf when it is about to achieve freedom and autonomy, goes back to its mother when unwatched for a moment, because it is afraid of growing up to its own life, and of being weaned.[2] The ambivalence in this struggle towards God and away from him has found its classical expression in Plotinos, whose personal ecstasies have prepared the pattern not only for all Neo-Platonic, but also for most of Christian mysticism. He describes the up and down movement in the search for the divine principle in this way:

> Everything that the soul advances towards what is formless, not

[1] *The Cloud of Unknowing*, Chap. IX.
[2] This parable is elaborated upon in Visuddhj-Magga No. 163.

being able to understand it because it is indeterminate, and so to speak has not received the impression of a distinctive type, the soul withdraws therefrom, fearing she will meet nonentity. That is why, in the presence of such things she grows troubled, and descends with pleasure. Then, withdrawing therefrom, she, so to speak, lets herself fall till she meets some sense-object, on which she pauses, and recovers; just as the eye which, fatigued by the contemplation of small objects, gladly turns back to large ones.[1]

But this joy of having got away from the danger of being confronted with the Absolute never lasts long. The desire for that which overcomes ourself and our limited existence comes back and drives us into ever new dangers in our search for God. George Herbert has made this same oscillating desire-movement subject of a poem:

Lord, Thou didst make me, yet Thou woundest me;
Lord, Thou dost wound me, yet Thou dost relieve me;
Lord, Thou relievest, yet I die by Thee;
Lord, Thou dost kill me, yet Thou dost reprieve me
I cannot skill of these Thy wayes.

These mystics know that only our lower self in its blindness, regards it as a loss of pleasure thus to come closer and closer to the Absolute. But after we have changed the focus-point of our consciousness into the realm of the higher Self, we welcome the fact that our lower nature can no longer indulge in fanciful pleasures which in the beginning of mystical life are connected with every step we take on the ladder.

Looking back we can now recognize that the frustration of our sentiments was necessary to free us from all implications of selfishness in worship and sacrifice, and that thus the darkness into which we are driven is a good darkness which is bound to purify our striving.

After our whole intention has become one with holiness we shall no longer call this state a darkness, but rather a dark ray of light. Walter Hylton, in his "Scale of perfection" describes this process as a blessed change. Before it has happened we find within ourselves only emptiness, darkness and heaviness. All introspection seems therefore irksome and depressing.

[1] Plotinos, *Enneades* VI, 9, 3. Taken from Kenneth S. Guthrie's "Plotinos' Complete Works." G. Bell, London, 1918.

It seems a hundred years till you are out of yourself, in quest of some bodily delight or vain thought. He that cometh home and findeth naught there but dirt and smoke and a scolding wife will quickly run out of it. But do not you run out of it. Stay at home and endure the pains and the discomfort. For behind this nothingness, behind this dark and formless shape of evil is Jesus hid in His joy.[1]

We should be very careful not to confuse the stages of spiritual life which we have reached. Saint John of the Cross gives a whole chapter to an investigation into the differences between what he calls in his terminology the high stage of our being driven into the dark night of the soul, and common lukewarmness. We sigh and long and almost starve and yearn for the communion with God which we believe to have lost in the dark night, without a trace of resignation or cynicism, while on the other hand lukewarmness is free from those troubles and pains. It is rather that self-contented attitude where we do not bother much over any question about the background of life, and where we are entirely blind towards the mystery of existence.

One can frequently find in religious literature the complaint about the fact that the various steps on the ladder of spiritual development are subject to constant confusion. This confusion makes the picture of the mystical progress utterly unclear. One does not know where one stands, and one knows even less where another stands and out of what state of consciousness his words are formed.

The same idea may mean something altogether different when it is pronounced by different people. The loss of insight into the insufficiency of existence, that is, in more common expression, the loss of a contact with the Infinite, may mean just backsliding from inspiration into dullness, or else it may mean the attainment of an even higher wisdom for which all the expressions of earlier views become merely preparatory or insufficient. The psychologist C. G. Jung says: "If dull people lose the idea of God nothing happens—not immediately and personally at least."[2]

The inability of man to discriminate between the various stages in spiritual development becomes most clearly visible

[1] Hylton, quoted in Inge's *Studies of English Mystics*, John Murray, London, 1921, p. 91.

[2] C. G. Jung, *Psychology & Religion*, Yale University Press, 1938, p. 104.

when we regard the constantly occurring confusion between the highest experience of religious full-awakening on the one hand and the lower stages of emotional excitement or fatalistic quietism on the other hand. In the first case we may say that it is well known to everybody that frequently sensational excitement in sectarianism is mistaken for true religious inspiration. In the second case we can find, particularly in Eastern religion, the often repeated complaint that in the course of contemplation and Self-realization symptoms of laziness are taken for the attainment of the highest goal, and in a false contentment the striving is given up before it has even entered its decisive stages. We find in the Tibetan Precepts of the Gurus an enumeration of the ten resemblances in which one may err:

1. Desire may be mistaken for faith.
2. Attachment may be mistaken for benevolence and compassion.
3. Cessation of thought-processes may be mistaken for the quiescence of infinite mind, which is the true goal.
4. Sense perceptions (or phenomena) may be mistaken for revelations (or glimpses) of Reality.
5. A mere glimpse of Reality may be mistaken for complete realization.
6. Those who outwardly profess, but do not practice religion may be mistaken for true devotees.
7. Slaves of passion may be mistaken for masters of Yoga who have liberated themselves from all conventional laws.
8. Actions performed in the interest of self may be mistakenly regarded as being altruistic.
9. Deceptive methods may be mistakenly regarded as being prudent.
10. Charlatans may be mistaken for Sages.[1]

Tibet's great philosopher-poet Milarepa says similar things in one of his songs where he contrasts stages of consciousness which are seemingly alike:

The true drawing of the Voidness in one's mind,
And illusory obsessions of the consciousness,
Appear to be alike, but beware, and confuse them not.

The knowing of the Pure, the Unalloyed State, by meditation,

[1] *Tibetan Yoga & Secret Doctrine*, 77 ff.

And the fondness for the Tranquil State born of the
trance ecstatic of Quiescence,
Appear to be alike, but beware, and confuse them not.

The Flood-tide of the Deep of Intuition,
And other deep convictions that "This seemeth right,"
That seemeth true,"
Appear to be alike, but beware, and confuse them not.

The clear perception of the Mind unmodified,
And the noble impulse to serve others,
Appear to be alike, but beware, and confuse them
not.[1]

What interests us most in these lines is Milarepa's insisting upon the differentiation between the true Voidness and mere Quiescence. Thus the great Yogis are always aware of the difference between metaphysical and mere psychological Pureness or Rest, and insist on the fact that the highest goal can be reached only by making use of all one's strength, and not by passive dreaming along. To quote Milarepa again: "By not submitting oneself to the state of total oblivion and unconsciousness (of objects), but by exerting one's intellect or faculty of consciousness in this state, one gaineth the clear ecstatic state of quiescent consciousness."[2]

Though we do not yet know any historical connections between Zen-Buddhistic teachings in the Far East, and the earlier doctrines of the Tibetan Yogis, there occur frequently striking resemblances between them. We will find for instance, that the Zen-Buddhistic patriarchs have the same view about the problem we have just been discussing when they give us the advice "not to dwell in the Inner Void."[3]

But not only in Tibet and in the Far East can this idea be found. Santayana talks about the same difficulties, speaking about what he calls the realization of Pure Being:

Ultimate and supremely difficult as it is to achieve ascetically, *instinctively* it lies curiously near to the simple heart. Wherever

[1] *Tibets Great Yogi Milarepa*, ed. by W. Y. Evans-Wentz. Oxford University Press, London, 1928, p. 298 ff.
[2] Milarepa, p. 141.
[3] Bible of the World, p. 354.

there is peace—*not the peace of death*, but that which comes of liberation from constraint or distraction—there is a beginning of spirituality."[1]

We can see all over the world that the state of mystic unity, the highest oneness in ecstasy, has been time and again misunderstood as being a reduced vitality, a state of less vigor which can be compared with going to sleep rather than with awakening, in spite of the fact that the description given by mystics always calls it an awakening.

The reason for this misunderstanding must be found in the deplorable lack of knowledge of self and of the ways in which our experiences work in us. We just are not accustomed and therefore unable to distinguish between the plane below and the plane above our ordinary day-consciousness.

As we frequently do not know the difference between up and down in spiritual movements, we even talk interchangeably about "higher" and "deeper" ideas, higher and deeper ideals and thoughts. It means the same to us whether we say that in the process of self-integration we have reached the highest pinnacle of ideas, or if we say that we have penetrated into the very depth of them.

This complete mix-up of directions is fairly modern in human history. The Greeks knew the difference between them very well and in their language no confusion could arise. When they talked about reaching a contact with the Olympic gods on cloudy heights, it meant something utterly different from an approach to deities of the lower world. To go to the very depth of the problem would mean for the Greek mind, to contact those subterranean goddesses out of whose lap everything originates, while "highest achievements" would mean to the Greek, the contact of our human tendencies with the bright glance of the Olympians who stand for youth and for the future.

Our classic studies should make us aware of this difference, and at least keep us from the confusion which has marred the clearness of so many religious utterances.

[1] George Santayana, *Realm of Essence*, p. 59.

4. NEW NAMES OF GOD

Both in and out of the game.

WALT WHITMAN

THE PARADOX OF a religion of no-religion is produced by the fact that the human mind cannot grasp and realize any feeling or any fact without giving it a name. Names are the miraculous key to every possibility of understanding and of remembrance. On the other hand, names are dangerous instruments because they spoil so much of real life by tying it to one single meaning. But the human mind has always been fond of fixations; life seems to be easier when we feel that we can be sure of its going on according to a fixed pattern. Today we are learning again to loosen such fixations, and to give room to the full flux of life in its incommensurability and variety. Modern psychology has shown us how many illnesses of body and soul have their origin in the anxiety of fixation, which of course, means a horror of losing what you have won. Life means change, however, and hence a denial of change, of passing away, and even of death, means at the same time a denial of life. Because we have realized this fact we are now more inclined than ever before to change the names of every change-giving reality.

If we go back to the Middle Ages, or to the mentality of primitive peoples of our own day, we find a belief in the magic power of words and sounds. Even in Judaism the real name of God could not be pronounced. A person's real name is kept secret by primitives, because by using and changing and spoiling the name, the same effects can be produced on the person himself. Let the name vanish and the bearer of the name will die at the same moment! Thus, in old witchcraft we find the ceremony of Abracadabra, which originally is an Aramaic sentence meaning, "Fade away as this word is fading." When something or somebody was to be destroyed, the word *abracadabra* was recited thus, with the first and last letter dropped at each repetition: abracadabra, bracadabr, racadab, acada, cad, a— until nothing remained! This is black magic performed with names. We know that it can be done, for what else happens when, for instance, in polemics the names of the enemy are changed and spoiled until, at last, the enemies begin to spoil

themselves according to the false appellations? In the politics of today it often happens that a man is forced into false identification with something he despises until, having once accepted the identification, he is driven on and on in the direction of corruption which is prescribed by his adversaries. And in the end he really does not recognize himself!

To summarize: today we feel a need of changing the names of God, and of many other religious and philosophical concepts, because they have changed their meaning, or rather, the reality and our feeling toward it has changed. To retain the old, conventional names would mean that we are not aware of the fact of moving life, and are not willing to accommodate ourselves to a new reality, or a renewed world. Thus old names can become a grave danger to the very reality which they express.

Today there arises a new diffidence in pronouncing the name of God; many theologians, philosophers and poets try to express their religious feelings without making use of the word God. They think it is better to speak distinctly about such experiences without burdening or veiling them by a word such as God, which can only bring a great number of undesired associations. One might make a list of such new expressions, words which are especially invented to describe that reality to which each person feels himself bound. There should be no misunderstanding: we are not here seeking new gods, such as the God of Money, who was the most venerated deity of yesterday, of the Gods of Nationalism or of gagetry, who receive the highest worship today. We are interested only in the new names of the true God who stands behind all the idolatries as the one divine and eternal reality. The science of religion needs such a list of new names for its very subject, and this study may serve as an attempt and a stimulus to further research.

To begin with, over a hundred years ago Schleiermacher first tried to describe the central feeling of religion in quite a new way. He speaks not of "faith," but of a "feeling of absolute dependence," which can be found in every religion. Today some theologians go much further, for they not only describe religious experience in a new way, but they objectify what has been subjective in the so-called experience-theology of the last century, naming the *object* of faith God in quite a new way.

Rudolph Otto calls the object of every true religion "the entirely different," that is, that which is completely different from all other subjects of experience.[1] This is indeed a new name for God. But later, Otto falls back into old expressions when he points out that the special characteristics of this entirely different being are the *tremendum* and the *fascinosum*, the frightening and the appealing quality, a peculiar mixture which today is called "dialectical."

The new names of God which are being born today are not found in the old ways of thinking. Ever since the scholastic era systematic theology has known two ways of intellectual approach to God, that is, of finding the expressions, the names, with which to talk about God. These two ways have been the *via negationis*, the Neoplatonic way of denying all qualities which the lay mind would probably attribute to God, and the *via eminentiae*, or majestatis, the platonic way of placing all earthly qualities and virtues on a higher level, and thus coming at last to the absolute pinnacle of all goodness and brightness and power. The most famous example for the way of negation can be found in a chapter of Plotinos' Enneades:[2]

In the vision of the divinity, that which sees is not the reason, but something prior and superior to reason; if that which sees be still united to reason, it then is as that which is seen. When he who sees himself sees, he will see himself as simple, being united to himself as simple, and will feel himself as simple. We should not even say that he will see, but only that he will be what he sees, in case that it would still here be possible to distinguish that which sees from that which is seen, or to assert that these two things do not form a single one. This assertion, however, would be rash, for in this condition he who sees does not, in the strict sense of the word, see; nor does he imagine two things. He becomes other, he ceases to be himself, he retains nothing of himself. Absorbed in the divinity, he is one with it, like a centre that coincides with another centre. While they coincide, they form but one, though they form two in so far as they remain distinct. In this sense only do we here say that the soul is other than the divinity. Consequently this manner of vision is very difficult to describe. How indeed could we depict as different from us Him who, while we were contemplating Him, did not seem other than ourselves, having come into perfect at-one-ment with us?

[1] Rudoff Otto, *Das Ganz-Andere*, as used in his book *Das Heilege* "The Idea of the Holy," H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1924.
[2] Plotinos' *Enneades* VI 9, (10-11) p. 166.

That, no doubt, is the meaning of the mystery-rites' injunction not to reveal their secrets to the uninitiated. As that which is divine is unspeakable, it is ordered that the initiate should not talk thereof to any (uninitiated person) who have not had the happiness of beholding it (the vision).

As (this vision of the divinity) did not imply (the existence of) two things, and as he who was identical to Him whom he saw, so that he did not see Him, but was united thereto, if anyone could preserve the memory of what he was while thus absorbed into the Divinity, he would within himself have a faithful image of the Divinity. Then indeed had he attained at-one-ment, containing no difference, neither in regard to himself, nor to other beings. While he was thus transported into the celestial region, there was within him no activity, no anger, nor appetite, nor reason, nor even thought. So much the more, if we dare say so, was he no longer himself, but sunk in trance or enthusiasm, tranquil and solitary with the divinity, he enjoyed an imperturbable calm. Contained within his own "being," (or essence), he did not incline to either side, he did not even turn towards himself, he was indeed in a state of perfect stability, having thus, so to speak, become stability itself.

In this condition, indeed, the soul busies herself not even with the beautiful things, for she rises above beauty, and passes beyond even the (Stoic) "choir of virtues." Thus he who penetrates into the interior of a sanctuary leaves behind him the statues placed (at the entrance) of the temple. These indeed are the first objects that will strike his view on his exit from the sanctuary, after he shall have enjoyed the interior spectacle, after having entered into intimate communion, not indeed with an image or statue, which would be considered only when he comes out, but with the divinity. The very word "divine spectacle" does not, here, seem sufficient (to express the contemplation of the soul); it is rather an ecstasy, a simplification, a self-abandonment, a desire for intercourse, a perfect quietude, and last, a wish to become indistinguishable from what was contemplated in the sanctuary. Any one who would seek to see the Divinity in any other way would be incapable of enjoying His presence.

By making use of these mysterious figures, wise interpreters wished to indicate how the divinity might be seen. But the wise hierophant, penetrating the mystery, may, when he has arrived thither, enjoy the veritable vision of what is in the sanctuary. If he have not yet arrived thither, he can at least conceive the invisibility (for physical sight) of That which is in the sanctuary; he can conceive the source and principle of everything, and he recognizes it as the one particular principle worthy of the name. But when he has succeeded in entering into the sanctuary, he sees the Principle, enters into communication with it, unites like to like, leaving aside no divine thing the soul is capable of acquiring.

Before obtaining the vision of the divinity, the soul desires what

yet remains to be seen. For him, however, who has risen above all things, what remains to be seen is He who is above all other things. Indeed, the nature of the soul will never reach absolute nonentity. Consequently, when she descends, she will fall into evil, that is, nonentity, but not into absolute nonentity. Following the contrary path, she will arrive at something different, namely, herself. From the fact that she then is not in anything different from herself, it does not result that she is within anything, for she remains in herself. That which, without being in essence, remains within itself, necessarily resides in the divinity. Then it ceases to be "being," and so far as it comes into communion with the Divinity it grows superior to "being" (it becomes supra-being). Now he who sees himself as having become divinity, possesses within himself an image of the divinity. If he rise above himself, he will achieve the limit of his ascension, becoming as it were an image that becomes indistinguishable from its model. Then, when he shall have lost sight of the divinity, he may still, by arousing the virtue preserved within himself, and by considering the perfections that adorn his soul, reascend to the celestial region, by virtue rising to Intelligence, and by wisdom to the Divinity Himself.

Such is the life of the divinities; such is also that of divine and blessed men; detachment from all things here below, scorn of all earthly pleasures, and flight of the soul towards the Divinity that she shall see face to face (that is, "alone with the alone," as thought Numenius).

As an echoing voice from the Far East to these ideas of Plotinos, we quote here a few lines of Yoka Daishi's "Song of Enlightenment," which confirm the inadequacy of human expression in face of the Absolute, and by this prepare the basis for a negative theology:

> *The great elephant does not walk on the hare's lane,*
> *Supreme enlightenment goes beyond the narrow range of intellection.*[1]

Today these two ways, the via negationis and the via eminentiae, are no longer possible. The human consciousness of our day could not possibly accept them, because we see now that the negative way is wholly abstract, and that through it the deeper, unconscious feelings cannot be reached; and secondly, we realize that the elevating way is too intimately connected with our every day experiences to be able to lead us to something beyond. We feel too distinctly, to quote Karl Barth, that one does not say God if one says Man in a loud voice.

[1] Yoka Daish's *Song of Enlightenment*, Bible of the World, p. 364.

The pioneers of modern thought advance in quite other ways, which the former dogmatists could not have known. One might call these new-found ways the *via interponendi* and the *via limitationis*. By the *via interponendi* is meant the way of those who, according to their personal religious experiences, try to express the holy Unknown as something which always lies *between*—in the midst of our everyday experiences—and which comes out of this very reality. It is not behind it, as has been said in former times, but is in between it. As the English poet, T. S. Eliot, says:[1]

Between the idea and the reality,
Between the motive and the act,
Falls the shadow,
For Thine is the Kingdom.

Between the conception and the creation,
Between the emotion and the response,
Falls the shadow,
Life is very long.

Between the desire and the spasm,
Between the potency and the existence,
Between the essence and the descent,
Falls the shadow,
For Thine is the Kingdom.

One can find similar, but even more expressive phrases in the works of the poet Rainer Maria Rilke. He never takes the old ways of feeling, and so he has no use for conventional terms and outworn names. The newly shaped words of Rilke all try to approach the secret of that which is recognized as the Unknowable and the Unspeakable, and yet is at the same time neither on earth nor in heaven, but lies *between* heaven and earth, and speaks to us from every point, and especially from those very points which lie between this and that.

Strikingly similar seems the statement by John Cook Wilson:[1] "In one frame of mind even to those who have the belief,

[1] T. S. Eliot, Poems 1909-1925, London, p. 98.

[2] John Cook Wilson, *Statement & Inference*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1926, Vol. II, p. 855.

God seems a long way off—an infinite way, as they would say. He obviously can't be among the objects of the material world. We speak of Him as '*behind*' it, but as behind an impenetrable veil. In a way it would be a comfort if He only were a long way off in space, but He is '*behind*' the infinity of space itself. Even if we say that He is *in* the objects which are near enough to us, He seems concealed in them and, necessarily, even more concealed (it seems) than the forces of nature, which in a way are themselves not objects of a direct experience either."

Expressions of this same symbolic power are found in the eastern Jewish mystics of the Chassidim, in the important translations in which Martin Buber has presented them to the Western world.

The "*between*," which prevails in all these approaches to that reality which in former times was called the Beyond, is in close relation to all those new names of God which are found in the *via limitationis*—the new way of showing the borders of everything in life.

Yet this new way is foreshadowed in a passage from "The Cloud of Unknowing":[1]

"For by thine eyes thou mayest not conceive of anything, unless it be by the length and the breadth, the smallness and the greatness, the roundness and the squareness, the farness and the nearness, and the color of it. And by thine ears, nought but noise or some manner of sound. By thine nose, nought but either stench or savour. And by thy taste, nought but either sour or sweet, salt or fresh, bitter or pleasant. And by thy feeling, nought but either hot or cold, hard or tender, soft or sharp. And truly neither hath God nor ghostly things none of these qualities nor quantities. And therefore, leave thine outward wits, and work not with them, neither within nor without."

The so-called dialectical theology of our day following along these lines, has developed them into a modern theological system. Karl Barth, in his "Epistle to the Romans," writes:[2] "God, the pure limit and the pure beginning of all that we are and do" (No one would have used such terms in former ages!)

[1] Cloud of Unknowing, Chap. 70.

[2] Karl Barth *Epistle to the Romans*, trans. by E. C. Hoskyns, Oxford University Press, London, 1933.

"... in infinite qualitative distinction, confronting man and all that is human, never at all identical with what we call God." This would seem to be the complete refusal of all names of God, but Karl Barth's works are, as a matter of fact, a rich source of such names. He continues thus: "God, the absolute Stop against all human unrest, and the absolute Forward against all human repose. The Yes in our No, and the No in our Yes. The First and the Last, and as such the Unknown." And to quote another dialectical theologian, Friedrich Gogarten, in "Faith and Revelation,"[1] uses the following phrases, which give us new examples for our name-collection: "This God is the Incomprehensible to our comprehension; the Immeasurable by our measures; the Unperceivable by our perception; the origin and the end of all our knowing and conceiving, of all our standards and experiences."

There are also some new names of God invented by those who try to avoid all names for Him, especially the old and outworn ones, and yet try to speak about God. Emil Brunner usually speaks only of "the miracle" when he is referring to God. Similarly the Jesuit theologian Przywara calls God "the mystery at any rate," and Paul Tillich uses "The Unconditioned," and "What concerns us unconditionally" in referring to Him. This is probably not the place in which to consider in this connection some well-known names which modern thinkers have substituted for the name of God, such as the *élan vital*, the Higher Level, the Creative Life, etc., because it is doubtful whether these thinkers really have the religiously valid approach to that reality with which we are concerned here. More interesting are the historians of religion, who, when speaking of special gods of special peoples, refer to "the divine power which lies behind all these special symbols." An analogous expression, used by the Indologist, Betty Heimann, is "The neutral divine power behind all expressions of personal form, the indefinable productive center behind them all."

Finally, we must try to ascertain the principle behind all these new attempts. What is the new feeling which evokes all these expressions? It is that all these new names of God belong somehow to the Religion of Non-Religion, or at least, they are an

[1] Friedrich Gogarthen, *Von Glauben und Offenbarung*, Eugen Diederichs, 1923.

approach to it. There is, in our own day, a new pantheism, a new mysticism—tendencies which lead to abstraction and neutrality in all expressions—and at last, an inclination to psychological inversion of all so-called objective realities.

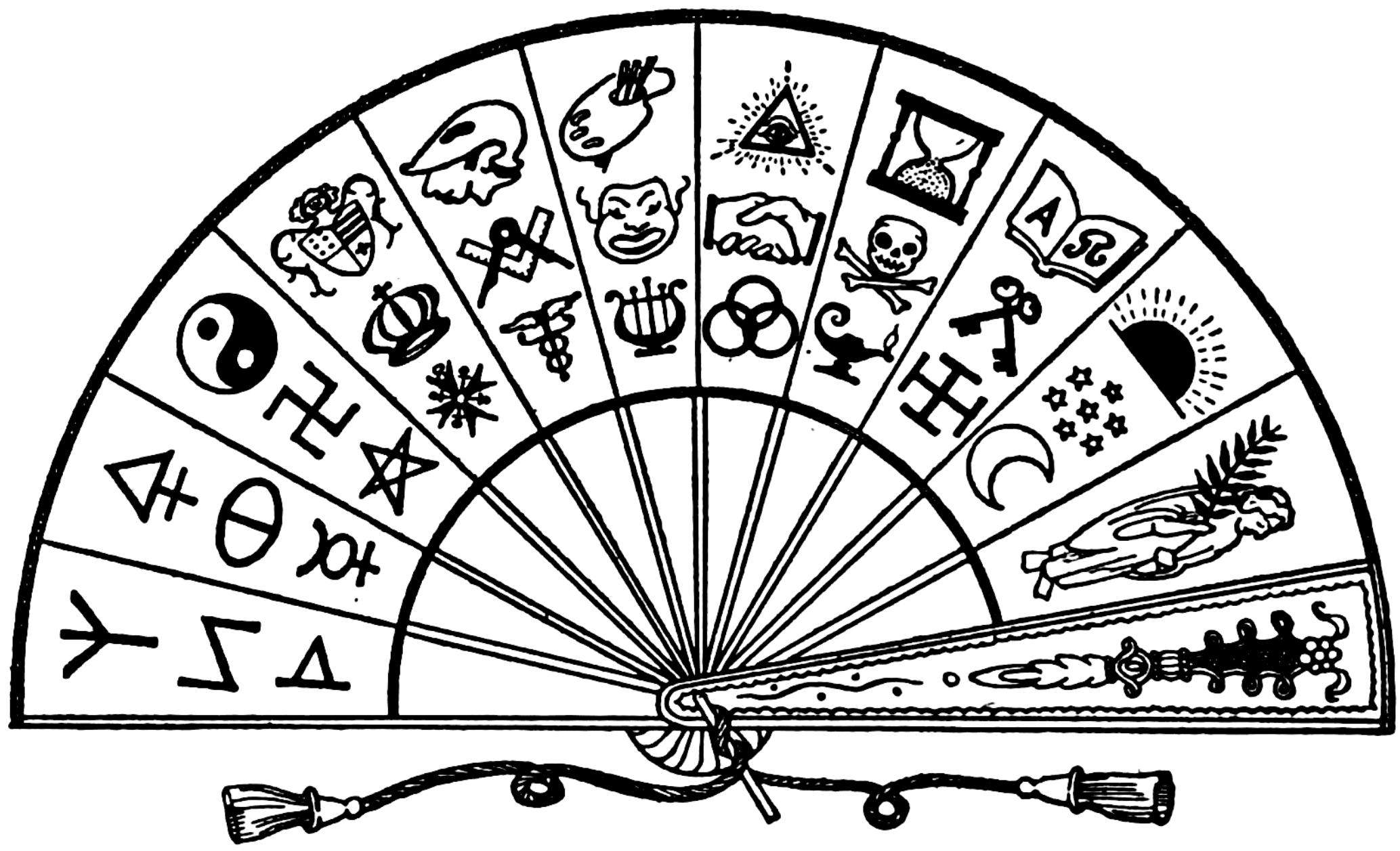
The change which necessarily follows upon these new feelings can best be seen by confronting the neutral character of these new names of God with the old doctrine of God as a *personality*. When this dogma was established in ancient times, there was not the same difficulty in the minds of those adopting it as there is today, for the concept of personality has completely changed. Today we conceive of personality as only a matter of high development and individualization of daylight-consciousness, that is, the rational waking state. In ancient times, however, personality embraced also what we call today the plane of the Unconscious. It included a much stronger neutral, general, social feeling which could be attributed to God. God was indeed a personality in the former meaning of the word. The psychologist C. G. Jung may well call God simply "The Unconscious," and this is not a revolutionary act, for his new name expresses exactly the same idea as the ancient doctrine of God as a personality. It is, in fact, only a correction of terms, a *translation* of the old expression "personality" into a new language. This proves that sometimes the conservative adherence to the conventional formulations means, in reality, a change of their significance, while, on the other hand, a seemingly revolutionary change of dogma can actually be an attempt to preserve the old and true religious meanings and content. Since the Western "personality" has become somehow a fortress of selfishness, it is scarcely possible to think of God as a personality.

There are other psychologists besides Jung who are fighting against all human desires for stabilization, for life is a process of changing and turning, and whoever wants to establish a fixed state of being, really prefers death to life.[1] Graham Howe in his book "War-Dance,"[2] attempts to show that it is just this wish for stabilization which must inevitably lead to war, even though it be nicely labelled "pacifism." It is indeed a curious error to believe that we can preserve the status quo by clinging to out-

[1] This idea has been most vividly and impressively pointed out in Alan Watts, *The Meaning of Happiness*, Harper's, 1941.

[2] Graham Howe, *War-Dance*, Faber & Faber, London, 1937.

moded forms of expression which have changed their meanings during the development of human thought. We may call that the demon of preservation, a false preservation at a time when only a re-interpretation can preserve the truth which is on the verge of being lost.[1]



[1] Parts of this chapter were published in earlier version in the *Review of Religion*, Columbia University Press, March 1938.

CHAPTER FOUR

WHY MAN IS UTTERLY LOST WITHOUT ART

I, Chanter of Pains and Joys,
Uniter of Here and Hereafter.

WALT WHITMAN

1. ART AS MAN'S PAST IN WORLD CREATION

SELF-REALIZATION, SELF-FINDING is possible only through self-loss (self in this latter sense as meaning the center of egoistic tendencies). Many practices lead to that aim, such as ancient sacrifice ceremony, primitive intoxication, and most clearly visible to us, art. That is why in this chapter we shall dwell on some principles of aesthetics.

What we are mainly interested in is the fact that art everywhere necessarily has an absorbing effect, which is most obvious in our reception of music. In order to attain to that high stage of enjoyment which is the aim in the performance of music, we must forget ourselves completely and become merely the vessel through which the melody is living its own life. One of the Baül-songs of northern India expresses it in this way:

The simple has its thirty million strings whose
mingled symphony ever sounds,
Take all the creatures of the World into yourself.
Drown yourself in that eternal music.[1]

Many music lovers will agree that one can never have perfect musical enjoyment as long as one is aware of one's own person and surroundings, but must have one's eyes closed and forget time and place, thus becoming an instrument through which the music exists.

Pythagoras gives us the metaphysical background for that cosmic consciousness which we acquire especially in our musical experience. He says that the revolving planets create a

[1] Quoted in Appendix on *The Baül singers of Bengal* in Rabindranath Tagore's, The Religion of Man, Allen & Unwin, London, 1931, p. 220.

harmony of the spheres of which we may become aware in inspirational moments. Thus he makes our own musical display an overtone of superhuman cosmic events. Our aesthetics accordingly can be derived from the mathematical laws prevailing in the universe.

The great Russian mystic Vladimir Soloviev feels the same way:[1]

Dear friend, hear'st thou not
this jarring tumult of life
Is but a far discordant echo
of heaven's triumphant harmonies?"

This idea is almost universal, so we are not surprised to find it expressed in an almost identical manner by the Persian Mystic Rumi:[2]

The song of the spheres in their revolutions
Is what men sing with lute and voice.
As we all are members of Adam,
We have heard these melodies in Paradise.
Though earth and water have cast their veil upon us,
We retain faint reminiscences of these heavenly songs;
But while we are thus shrouded by gross earthly veils,
How can the tones of the dancing spheres reach us?

It is natural that in Asia such an insight should be used for a practice. The Buddhist Yogis try in this way to overcome all fear-inspiring noises. Thus we read in a book of instructions, "The Path of Good Wishes"; which is meant to protect us from fear when we go, after death, through the threatening realms of visions and sounds:[3]

When the roarings of savage beasts are uttered,
Let it come that they be changed into the sacred
sounds of the Six Syllables. (Om mani padme hum)

Through his knowledge of the realm of sounds the Yogi may even become a master in this field, that is, by applying certain

[1] C. V. Soloviev *Shadows*, Lyra Mystica, An Anthology of Mystical Verse, ed. by Charles Carroll Albertson, MacMillan, New York, 1932, p. 116.

[2] D. H. Whinfield, abridged translation of the Masnavi of Rumi, p. 182.

[3] The Tibetan Book of the Dead, ed. by Evans-Wentz, Oxford University Press, London, 1936, p. 206.

Mantras, or sound combinations, he becomes able to influence conditions of the universe. In fact, every word that anyone utters throughout his life, has a very definite effect in the higher plane of archetypes.

The air breathed is the material which connects our actual human conditions with the Divine realm. Prana, breath power, is the most important vital energy in man, just as the wind in the universe is the highest god, identical in its essence with Brahma. Brahma, the origin and center of the world, unfolds himself in our breath. We exhale with the sound "Ham," inhale with the sound "Sah." In this way, by the noise of our breath, the word "Hamsah" is shaped, which means "Wild Swan," and that is the highest attribute of Brahma, as we have mentioned before in Chapter I.

If one reverses this word, namely by starting with the inhaling noise and then the exhaling one, sounding the phrase "Sah-ham" which means "That am I," one gets a formula which is an expression for the identification of the highest Self, the Atman, with the world Being itself, Brahman.

Thus the language of breathing is at the same time the highest revelation of the secret of existence, and breathing means uninterrupted prayer, unceasing preaching of Truth. The inner sound of breathing can be used as a vehicle leading to salvation —also in another way, when we become aware of the inner sounding of our bodily organs through the exercise of closing our eyes and listening inwardly. Thus the Hatha Yoga doctrine prescribes that we should sit down after midnight in a perfectly quiet spot and engage in breath control.

The contemplating man having closed his ears with his fingers, should fix his attention on the sound which is heard within, until he attains to a stage of higher consciousness. The hearing of the sound thus practised, gradually overpowers and drowns the external sounds. The Yogin, overcoming the instability of his mind, will become happy in fifteen days. During the initial stages of the practice various loud sounds are heard, but when progress is made they become more and more subtle. In the beginning the sounds resemble those of the ocean, the thunderclouds, the kettledrum; in the middle stage they resemble those arising from the conch, the bell, and the horn; in the end they resemble those of the tinkling bells, the flutes, and the bees. Even when the loud sounds of the clouds and the kettledrum are heard, one should try to fix one's attention on the subtler sounds. One may change one's attention

from the loud to the subtle sounds but should never allow one's attention to wander to other extraneous objects.[1]

At last the contemplation reaches an awareness of a soundless sound, from which point the consciousness proceeds into final extinction.

While through this practice man is participating passively in world evolution, he may actively take part in it by singing the powerful Mantras which may be creative or destructive. This world we live in is, according to a general Hindu belief, only the result of one exhaling movement within the eternal rhythm of God Brahma's breathing. Billions of worlds have been there before and will come afterwards. We are living now in that divine second of suspense after Brahma has exhaled, and all the stars in the universe quiver like bubbles in the air before his mouth. Soon, very soon, he will inhale again and all this we call life will be over for the time being. Brahma's world-creation means his reciting his own divine name "Hamsah," in the midst of which reciting we are now being suspended, as God has not yet completed his name.

This fact makes world history a philological affair, and makes the Hindus look at the science of grammar as the holiest discipline of all. They call it a super-science; it is a remedy for sicknesses of the words as well as those beings behind the words. In this way the creation becomes a double process. God Brahma remembers each time a new world comes into existence the names of the beings which had lived before. By quoting them he brings them again into existence. Therefore he who through language study reaches the word Brahma, will attain also to the highest eternal Brahma power.

Breathing, speaking, spelling, singing, music, and all art, are considered in Hinduism as pitha, a meeting-place of this world and the Beyond, as explained in Chapter I. He who becomes creative in any field of art, will feel himself to be, as Whitman says, "a uniter of here and hereafter." The artist will be a creator; poetry in particular, should be understood in the way in which Martin Heidegger[2] explains the German word Dichtung —as meaning to condense the lofty material of language sounds of which our world is built, into tangible and concrete form.

[1] Hatha-Yoga Pradipika, by Svatmarama, Chap. 4, No. 82-88.
[2] Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin und das Wesen der Dichtung.*

This is the typical way in which in recent years philosophy has come to mean hardly anything but philological investigation into the original and essential meaning of words.

The artist feels that he is participating in divine creation, or even feels himself creator. A modern psycho-analyst, Beatrice M. Hinkle, expresses it this way: "For the artist, like the woman, possesses a reality of a different order from that of the ordinary man. His ego is entirely identified with his creative processes which for him constitute the entire meaning and purpose of his life."[1]

Painting, sculpture, literature, in fact all arts, have become strongly intellectualized and stylized during the last century, so that today they are no longer absorbing enough for the broader masses and therefore can no longer serve their deepest purpose. This was not so in the past. Mediaeval paintings demonstrating the tortures of sinners in hell, dragon-fights or historic battlefields, certainly contained enough thrilling power to hold the interest of every spectator; however, since art has become an affair for only a few specially trained persons and leaves the masses cold, these broader masses have turned to other fields where they can find what true art no longer grants them. Movies, detective stories, and everything fostered by the "bunk" press, have taken the place of art. Millions every night in every country in the world, rush into movie houses, thus temporarily committing suicide by extinguishing their own personal trend of thought. One may well ask who is being killed in those scores of gangster movies, and the answer could only be—the spectator! His daily worries are wiped out, but as he is identified with these worries one might just as well say that he is extinguished himself. While watching those exciting proceedings on the screen, his own day-life becomes dream-like, a world of minor importance which disappears behind the idea-substitute of a phantasy that is materialized on the screen.

That is the relief which we may get from art as well as from pseudo-art. The two do not vary in this respect. Only from certain aesthetical standards which are not our concern here, can they be differentiated. The mass dream creation which is carried out on a great scale, represents a power of tremendous

[1] Beatrice M. Hinkle, *The Re-Creating of the Individual*, Harcourt, Brace Co., New York, 1923, p. 338.

influence, working through subconscious channels. We have to be fully aware of this power which might not only be abused for propaganda purposes, but represents as well a basis for any really constructive educational work.

What art and pseudo-art are doing for our self-liberation was achieved in primitive culture in a much simpler and more efficient way through the great sacrifice rituals, dancing ceremonies, and orgiastic festivities. There is no doubt that the abolishment of such practices means a definite loss, as they cannot be fully replaced by any cultural achievement which is more subtle but less efficient. A psychological clarification-process, in particular, which tries to raise our crude and elemental passions to a higher development and more intellectual plane of consciousness, can never be as successful as original rituals have been. In making the liberation from our lower self the main purpose of art, we have gained an extremely broad definition for the field of art, which embraces such divergent controversial phenomena as sacred kings' murder ceremonies as well as gangster movies. Sacrifice thus becomes the keynote of all art. This is expressed by Rilke in the following manner:[1]

And painters merely paint their pictures so
That, as immortal, thou receive again
That Nature which thou transitory mad'st:
All becomes eternal.

This gives a new understanding for the conception of religious art, as the author has pointed out in his book about the secularization of Japanese mentality as seen in the woodcuts of Ukiyoye,[2] where the attempt is made to free the concept of religious art entirely from its subject-matter, and to base it instead on the principles just formulated.

To make this clear by an example one might say that it is evident that a painter can take a landscape as his subject-matter and yet paint it in a pious way so that his picture becomes a work of religious art. This would be true as well for El Greco as for Turner and the similar Chinese brush-paintings. On the other hand not all the pictures representing conventional re-

[1] Rainer Maria Rilke, *Das Stundenbuch*, p. 59.

[2] Friedrich Spiegelberg, *Die Profanisierung des Japanischen Geistes.* Veröffentlichung des Forschungs-Instituts für Vergleichende Relig. Gesch. and Univ. Leipzig. Edw. Pfeiffer, Leipzig, 1929.

ligious material could be classified as religious art. Certain 19th century painters, as Uhde for instance, constantly painted the stories from the life of Jesus in an entirely secular way. Their pictures lack completely the character of religious art as we have defined it.

John Dewey seems to be in agreement with an attempt to find a more comprehensive basis for aesthetic principles when he writes: "Play and fine art . . . are moral necessities. They are required to take care of the margin that exists between the total stock of impulses that demand outlet, and the amount expended in regular action. They keep the balance which work cannot indefinitely maintain. They are required to introduce variety, flexibility and sensitiveness into disposition."[1]

Dewey, however, has restricted the meaning of art here too narrowly when he takes only the moral field into account. This leads him on to the further attempt to make art entirely subject to human needs and merely an instrument for improving conditions, when he writes that what only art can do for human nature is "softening rigidities, relaxing strains, allaying bitterness, dispelling moroseness, and breaking down the narrowness consequent upon specialized tasks."[2]

The more comprehensive meaning of art as we have tried to express it by looking at its religious basis, will become much clearer when we now try in the following considerations to explain that process of ego-replacement which art can afford, by looking at the related Indian terminology which can be found in the description of various Yoga meditations.

[1] John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, Henry Holt, New York, 1922, Chap. 6, p. 160.

[2] John Dewey, p. 162.

2. THE FIXATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Muhammad ibn Wasi said: "I never saw anything without seeing God therein." Shibli said: "I never saw anything except God."

NICHOLSON

WHAT IN OUR Western world is unconsciously achieved through art creation and art enjoyment is consciously developed in Eastern meditation practices. There our ordinary higgeldy-piggeldy of uncontrolled and drifting sentiments and thought fragments is replaced by the bright clearness of a one-way consciousness which knows where it is going and what it is contemplating. This is done in Indian Yoga through the practices of Dharana or fixation of the thinking organ on a single object. In order to reach this stage of meditative achievement the Indian practitioner, the Yogin, has to submit himself to a number of exercises which make use of a controlled sensuality. These are the Kasina exercises of which we have heard but little in the West. It is therefore fitting to describe a few of them.

Without a certain amount of Dharana we could scarcely live at all nor would we be able to work in the right way. Everyone is engaged permanently in Kasina-exercises without knowing it. The effect of these proceedings is that our energies gain a clear-cut direction. Every rhythmical activity, for instance the beating of a melody or the quiet humming of tunes in endless repetition of the same motive, or the twisting of tablecloth corners, (an act similar to the oldfashioned curling of mustache ends)—all these are unconscious practices leading to a fixation of directions for activities. We have furthermore intentionally prepared aids towards a simplification of our tendencies—towards what in Yoga is called "one-pointedness."[1] We start doing so even as children in the cradle when we put into our mouths pacifiers which we suck for hours without visible aim or success. Older children frequently have extensive practices of their own for the fixation of their attention on a certain ceremony—practices which are usually unknown and hidden from adults who have forgotten that they did the same when they were children. In fact, histories of cultural fields like that of religion, sociology, and folk-lore, should be paralleled and even ampli-

[1] Ekagatta, *Visuddhi-Magga*, Chap. 84.

fied by adding to what has been explored up to the present, a new science of history of religion, sociology, and folk-lore of children. "For Children Only" might even be written over a number of practice-grounds of life where adults are excluded. To mention a few examples: how frequently do children run along the streets imagining that they are a train and behaving thus! And how frequently do they celebrate the ceremony of stepping over the cracks in the sidewalk to avoid touching them! This act if done a thousand or more times would lead to the more elaborate group ceremony called in some localities "Hop-scotch," a game in which children hop on one leg from one chalked-off square to another.

Adults likewise cling to similar practices which seem to be very necessary in life. The habit of smoking, for instance, must be explained along this line. The usual explanation given by most people that smoking is done in order to get a certain effect from the nicotine content, is obviously nonsense as this effect could be secured much more easily and quickly in many other ways. It is rather done as an end in itself, and probably represents the residue of an ancient smoke sacrifice.

Therefore from the standpoint of soul discipline there is no point in trying to wean somebody away from the habit of smoking. One would rather direct the attention of the habitual smoker towards the real meaning of his activity, and thus change a meaningless vice into a thoughtful concentration practice.

Wherever we step in our life-activity beyond momentary necessity and beyond immediate enjoyment, we find the principle of Kasina exercise at work. The need for consciousness-fixation (Dharana) is visible whenever we try to arrange our daily life systematically, or whenever we try to express strict order in the way we arrange our belongings on the writing desk, or in the way we arrange our clothing on a chair at night. Only this order must never be overdone as an aim in itself or as stiff pedantry; in that case we would easily become subject to the mind-sickness called Ritualism. All the blessings of Kasina exercises would then be extinguished through an impersonal and unconscious coercion. The same is true for our attitude toward all kinds of domestic pets and house plants, and for collections of stones, butterflies, stamps or even for assortments of factual knowledge.

It was recently reported "from a poll of the nation's better known insane asylums that no stamp collector has ever inhabited any of those institutions as a long-term, short-term or any other kind of inmate." And the writer of this report[1] draws the conclusion that it would be good to get oneself a hobby, and to ride it as hard as one pleases, because that would take one's mind off one's troubles and make an actual, tangible little world in which one really would be king.

Hobbies thus may help our concentration when carried on consciously. On the other hand they may keep us away from higher development whenever we are ruled by a hobby-mania instead of our retaining control of our own volition.

Buddhist teachers have given us ten different kinds of Kasina exercises as a help in this stage of development. We shall describe one of them, the Earth-Kasina, according to a well known book "Path of Purity," which has been mentioned before.[2]

After having chosen the right spot, and after having accomplished the prescribed postures and breathing exercises, the student should build a small table by driving four sticks into the earth, stretching between them a mat; then bringing bright brown clay, he should rub it with a smooth stone to a plain round disk about a foot in diameter. Those students who are ego-centric, stubborn, or inclined to harbour fixed ideas, should make the circumference larger, but those who are apt to be distracted, and whose thoughts are easily dispersed, are advised to choose a smaller size. After having cleaned up the place and bathed, one should sit down about two yards distant on a low chair, with complete confidence and trust in the effect of the exercise; one should now purify one's mind so that no disturbing influences from uncontrolled sentiments, passions or ideas can interrupt the meditation.

Now one has to develop the "inner picture" of the Kasina disk. In order to achieve this one has to concentrate on it for a long time in complete calmness and without motion. The eyes should be only half open, just about the way in which one would look at one's own face in the mirror, for with the eyes

[1] Colliers, *How to stay Home*, June 29, 1940, p. 58.

[2] Visuddhi-Magga, Chap. IV., also reprinted in Warren, *Buddhism in Translation*, Harvard University Press, 1922, p. 293.

too wide-open small details would become disturbing, and with the eyes opened too slightly the mind would become tired.

To help along the concentration one might calmly murmur manifold names and attributes for Earth such as: "Thou Mighty One, Extended, Fruitful, Being, Treasure-spending, Treasure-hiding," etc. By thus diverting the attention from all other thoughts, even for our senses all other things outside the disk will soon disappear. After some time one proceeds alternately to open and close the eyes in a hundred, a thousand repetitions until the "inner picture" of the disk is clearly attained. This picture will then be equally clear whether the eyes are open or closed.

If this state has been reached one may tentatively leave the meditation spot for a short time in order to learn whether the picture has remained unchangeable in us, even when we go away from it. If this is not yet achieved one has to go on and repeat the exercise.

Eventually the "counter-picture" is developed; it is, however, an inner picture and without any of the impurities of the actual disk. It is free from earth and any other objectivity, pure and bright like the moon. This picture one has to carry in oneself from now on as a jewel and to guard it tirelessly as the "embryo of a world ruler." That is the "golden germ" which has been longed for by the Chinese Taoists and by the Alchemists of the Middle Ages.

Something similar was experienced by the Mystic Jakob Boehme when he gazed fixedly at the sun-spot in his shoemaker's globe until he was partially blinded and a permanent reflection remained in his eyes. Wherever he looked from now on divine light met him as something miraculously proceeding from all things, shining out from another plane of reality. What Boehme thus got as a result of a physiological process is created by the Yogin's meditation in pure mind.

It is mainly important that the student should create for himself such a meditation picture as a constant companion; the special content of this meditation-picture is less important, and so are the special ways in which it has been developed. Instead of using a clay disk, the meditation can be carried out as well by looking at an evenly ploughed field. In the so-called Water-Kasina, the Yogin concentrates on the circular water surface in

a pot, or on a lake as seen from a mountain. Also fire in the hearth or in the candle-flame, and the wind which sways the tree-tops, can be used as Kasina.

Concentration on sounds may have exactly the same effect.

A word then, (for I will conquer it)
The word final, superior to all,
Subtle, sent up—what is it?—I listen;
Are you whispering it, and have been all the time,
you sea-waves?
Is that it from your liquid rims and wet sands?
Whereto answering, the sea,
Delaying not, hurrying not,
Whisper'd me through the night, and very plainly
before daybreak,
Lisp'd to me the low and delicious word death,
And again death, death, death, death,
Hissing melodious, neither like the bird nor like my
arous'd child's heart,
But edging near as privately for me, rustling at my
feet,
Creeping thence steadily up to my ears and laving
me softly all over,
Death, death, death, death, death.
Which I do not forget . . .[1]

Here Walt Whitman, to say it in Yoga language, has succeeded in bringing about in his mind a constant awareness of death (shown by the words: "which I do not forget" by making use of the sound qualities in an ocean-wave Kasina. In Far Eastern Buddhism a strikingly similar practice is developed. In order to become aware of the vanity and transitoriness of existence, the monk is taught to repeat the word for No (Wu in Chinese, Mu in Japanese) so frequently that it finally sounds eternally in his consciousness. Then he can no longer be lured into an unbroken belief in plain reality, but the character of brokenness will become constantly connected with all his experiences. Whatever he does, whatever sounds enter into his ear, nothing can impress him in the end. The crying of people around, the rush of motor cars going by blowing their horns—all this in his sound-con-

[1] Walt Whitman, *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking.*

sciousness becomes immediately translated into that eternal murmuring "Mu . . . Mu . . . Mu . . ." which covers all reality like a blanket.

This same exercise has been employed by the Tibetan teachers for psycho-therapeutical purposes. Ancient sources tell us that once a man, whom we would call a neurotic today, was tormented nightly by awful dreams where he heard the menacing howling of jackals. His teacher then gave him the exercise of meditating about all sounds occurring in the world as being nothing but jackals howling, thus universalizing his personal nightmare. We are told that the man attained salvation through this exercise by becoming aware of the super-personal importance of his awe, which before that time he had simply taken as an individual affair.[1]

Moreover, any emotion that becomes inherent in our consciousness, even every lasting mood may be used as a help for the fixation of our consciousness. Does not even every phobia, every compulsory idea, every insatiable hatred, all infatuation give a certain concentration power, and a uniform, single-pointedness of the will power? For an example we may think about the mood which is described romantically in Chamisso's poem so well known through Schumann's musical setting:

Since mine eyes have seen him, as if blind I seem,
When I gaze around me I see only him.
Ever thus his image does my daydream fill,
Growing out of darkness, brighter beaming still.

A similar Love-Kasina is recorded in Sufi tradition. We are told that Majnun concentrated so intensely on Layla that the whole world appeared finally in her image and all things took her shape. The Sufis even have a technical term for what they call the concentration upon a desired object which results in complete unification.[2]

Returning to the field of religious experience, we find Meister Eckhardt[3] describing in one of his sermons how a man carries God with him all the time and enjoys nothing else but God. We may attain to a stage where God remains always pres-

[1] Grünwedel, No. 21.
[2] Hujwiri's expression "jam," in Nicholson, p. 159.
[3] Quoted in *Light, Life and Love* (Ed. by Ingel), p. 547.

ent to our minds, even if we are in a crowd. In Tibet these fixation-exercises start generally with the student's daily occupation. Thus the street-sweeper has to take his work of sweeping as content of his meditations, the painter that of painting, the potter that of turning his potter's wheel, the shoemaker his own craft, etc.

Here again we see that the meaning of these exercises is covered completely with our awareness of what we are doing, never mind what this special profession may be. Any occupation is equally suitable to serve as a basis for Kasina exercises. In modern Zen-Buddhism this idea is carried to its extremes. There couldn't exist any way of life in which he who is awakened to clear awareness could not proceed to the perfect state of an enlightened saint, of a Bodhisattva. It may be that the highest sages of our time, the coming Buddhas, are sitting unknown in some office as modest employees, themselves unaware of their dignity and nobility, because they more than others do not indulge in useless self-reflection.

Contemplations on plants and on parts of plants have always been considered most effective in the elementary stages of a meditation exercise. Whoever is able to extract, so to speak, his consciousness out of his body, and to project it into the luminous inside of a flower, for instance into a tulip chalice, will be thrilled by the wonders which open up in such a vision. Others try to develop with closed eyes the sensation of a leaf and then draw out of that vision flower, fruit, stem and roots and all the remaining parts of the plant in the way in which Goethe tried to follow the emanation of plant life out of an original idea. Today these special exercises are fostered in Rudolph Steiner's school of the so-called Anthroposophists.

Through the projection of our ego away from our body into other bodies, we may extend our knowledge of other ways of living enormously, for in this way we become able to participate in the life-consciousness of another being and thus to put ourselves into the place of a fellow-human, or even of an animal or a plant.

We will be better able to realize the order "Know yourself" if thus we feel and watch ourselves in as many situations as possible. We shall never know about our life-situation as long as we remain continually in the same surroundings and shrink

from exposing ourselves to entirely different ways of existence.

The deeper meaning of masquerades is to make us aware of the possibilities of being entirely different from our ordinary existence. We realize then that we would also be able to live as a prince or as a monk, where other sides of our being which are generally mute could express themselves. We are able to be Chinese or a little babe, or even to unfold animal-like possibilities.

Every actor knows that sinking oneself in one's role discloses unknown sides of one's nature, and that by this procedure the normal daily life-attitude becomes altogether questionable, because it might also be possible that we would not live our ordinary life but change to an entirely different form. Most of the time we are not fully aware of the many enormous possibilities of metamorphosis which are always inherent in us. We cling eagerly to the once-acquired shape which we take as the only possible one, and thereby keep out the more distant possibilities of being. We know so little about our own life-attitude, our behavior, and our gestures, that we do not even recognize ourselves when we see our profile unexpectedly in a window mirror, or when we watch our own movements on the movie-screen, or even if our voice and inflections appear on a grammophone record.

In order to become aware of the enormous amount of unrealized possibilities, it is useful to sometimes completely fall out of one's part, for instance to go to places which we usually never enter, or join a party in which we have to behave quite differently from our ordinary surroundings.

Everyone now and then should direct his interest experimentally to fields which he usually avoids. Many talents which otherwise would have been forever concealed have been discovered in this way. Only through daring in unknown fields, do we become aware of our limitations. We certainly cannot afford to leave unused any opportunity to widen our horizon, because in this way we gain wider self-knowledge and power. The most important way to achieve this is to sink oneself in works of art. The final meaning of art-enjoyment lies in its starting just such a process of metamorphosis, of rebirth of our ego. The result of every contact with works of literature, painting or music, should be that we leave them as changed person-

alities, otherwise their purpose would not have been fulfilled.

Our consciousness has not a definite size in space. It is by no means simply as large as our body. We can any time enlarge it into giant size and make it grow beyond mountain, valley and ocean, but we can as well diminish it and even make it disappear by spatial contraction. We are able in our fantasy to stride through distant regions with seven-mile boots, but we are able equally well, by intensive contemplation on the world of minuteness, to forget about our human body to the extent that we believe we stroll between moss and grass.

It isn't necessary to go on expensive and time-consuming travels, and to transport our body into foreign countries, if we want to transcend every-day consciousness, because the diminution of our ego-feeling is sufficient to transport ourselves into a true world of magic, where with childlike enjoyment we are able to blaze new trails through unknown fields.

The Tibetan Yogis recommend the following exercise for the beginning day: First decrease your consciousness in space and value so far that you feel yourself a microscopic being compared to the immense universe. You know yourself to be a microbe of utter unimportance which, together with our entire solar system one day will vanish into nothingness through the breath of a god. Then, however, add immediately the opposite meditation in which you feel yourself to be a giant god in relation to that microscopic world which moves in every cell of your body.

The result and meaning of such a thought-exercise in the early morning is that now for the entire day we are freed from a meaningless estimation of life events according to mere quantitative viewpoints. After all, what lastly is great and what is small in face of eternal Truth?

The applications of Kasina-exercises are manifold, but when we start to shape this world ourselves in a magical way and to change it in its basic pattern, we are entering the practices of a next higher stage.

3. CREATIVE PATTERNS OF THE SOUL: TIBETAN MANDALAS

Life imitates art far more than art imitates life.

OSCAR WILDE

THE KASINA-EXERCISES made use of already existing forms of nature and conditions of life. These were not really changed but re-interpreted according to a new standard of valuation.

The Yogin may go beyond that and try to change existing situations by his meditations. If he does this he does not stop indulging in his own life-vision, but attempts to influence the outer world by influencing the ideas of other people. He becomes able to acquire high powers in the psychic field. One of the means known to us all, by which he achieves such an effect, is art. We should use the word "art" only there where the elements of world-existence have been transformed—so to speak, created anew, into a higher and more meaningful being, and where correspondingly the human self has been re-created into a shape of consciousness which is wide open and receptive towards higher worlds.

This is true not only for ritual paintings with religious subjects, which are used by so many peoples in their purification exercises, but also for every kind of creation of new reality by works of art. We may ask ourselves in which ways this magic artificial transformation of the world occurs. This is done by a "mentalization," that is, by objectifying the shape of ourself, and by projecting it into outside reality. He who composes a symphony has therewith given birth to his own soul-shape and soul-mood, which he projects into the world as an imperishable part of existence; wherever his music is brought to life he is acting immediately on the soul-shape of the listeners, transforming and re-creating them according to the pattern of his own self.

In the same way gardeners and architects imprint the shape of their own inner life on nature, and by doing this, change it magically into something human. This ego-penetration of the world has found its expression also in the well-known idea of a mysterious correspondence between human and cosmic powers and shapes. "As above, so below;" "as outside, so inside," is the

old hermetical formula on which all magic is based.[1] In India we find the idea that the universe in the shape of a "World Woman" is built according to the human body, and that vice versa our body bears all gods and powers of higher world in its organs. Thus we read in the Shiva-Purana "In this body stands the world-mountain Meru, surrounded by the seven island-continents; in it are the streams, rivers and oceans, the mountains and countries, and the divine protectors of the countries. There are all the prophets and saints, the constellations and planets, holy pilgrimage places and thrones of gods, together with the gods of these thrones. There are moving Moon and Sun, effecting creative unfoldment and annihilating reduction. Ether, air and fire, water and earth, are in it. Also the beings of all the three worlds in their becoming and in their vanishing state, are in this body, moving around the Meru each according to his own way. He who knows all this is a Yogin, that is certain."

This idea of the correspondence between world and human body is so deeply rooted in the Hindu mind that it penetrates all fields of worship.[2] Thus the Hindu temple is looked at as symbolizing both the body of a god and the being of man. Coming from our Western cultural heritage, we are accustomed to think about temples and churches as being the living place of a god, a house in which he dwells. This is Greek and Roman tradition. Somewhere within the temple the god is located, symbolized by a statue on the altar.

We must overcome this feeling entirely if we want to understand the meaning of a Hindu temple. It is not considered the house but rather the body of the god, and our worship consists of a meditation-exercise by which we make the temple our body. We observed a similar identification when we discovered the Kasina. This Eastern idea is not entirely unknown to Western minds, but can be found in the mystical theology of Bonaventura, who describes in his "Itinerarium mentis ad deum" how, through a process of purification in seven steps, the soul is taken possession of by divine wisdom and becomes a house of God.

[1] From the Tabula Smaragdina, as quoted see page 91

[2] Compare Ananda K. Coomaraswamy *The Transformation of Nature in Art*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, 1935, and also his article *Understanding and Reunion*—"An oriental perspective in the Asian Legacy and American life," ed. by Arthur E. Christy, An Asian Press Book, John Day Co., 1945.

As soon as the Hindu worshipper succeeds in spreading his consciousness throughout the entire inner space of the temple into all the angles and hollow shapes left by the ornamental parts of the architecture, he has become unified with his god, undistinguishable from him. At the same time he has come to realize all parts of the universe as parts of his own being.

The various architectural units of the temple correspond to the elements of nature as well as to the organs of the human body.[1] The square basis of the temple symbolizes the element earth, yellow in color and also the basic consciousness accumulation point situated somewhere along the genital organs. The cupolaed main section of the building symbolizes the element water (shaped like a single water drop, green in color), and also the center of the bodily liquids in the intestinal region.

The steep triangular spire on top of the cupola represents the element fire, red in color, and stands at the same time for the heart center of human consciousness development. The crescent-shaped top ornament, white in color, represents the element air and also the forehead-eye, which, according to Tantra-Yoga, is a two-petaled lotus opening upward, in order to receive in this stage of development the last order from the higher world. This final highest realm of ether, blue in color, is symbolized in the temple building by a flame-like point on the very top of the building. In the exercise of uplifting the human consciousness through the various spheres of the body, this signifies the point of salvation where the vital energy leaves the physical body through the Brahma-split on the top of the head, like a flame dissolving itself into the higher realm of holiness and superior light (See diagram on p. 84).

Here we find a perfect parallelism between the cosmos in its elements, the temple building in its parts, and the human body in its organs, which stand at the same time for the various stages which our consciousness acquires in the course of its process of integration.

An equal, though less systematically developed parallelism can be found in the description given by early Indian sacrificial texts, the Brahmana-scriptures, which give detailed prescriptions for the building of the fire altar which symbolizes the universe.

[1] For the spiritual anatomy of this "feeling-body" compare A. Avalon, *The Serpent Power*, Lurac, London, 1919.

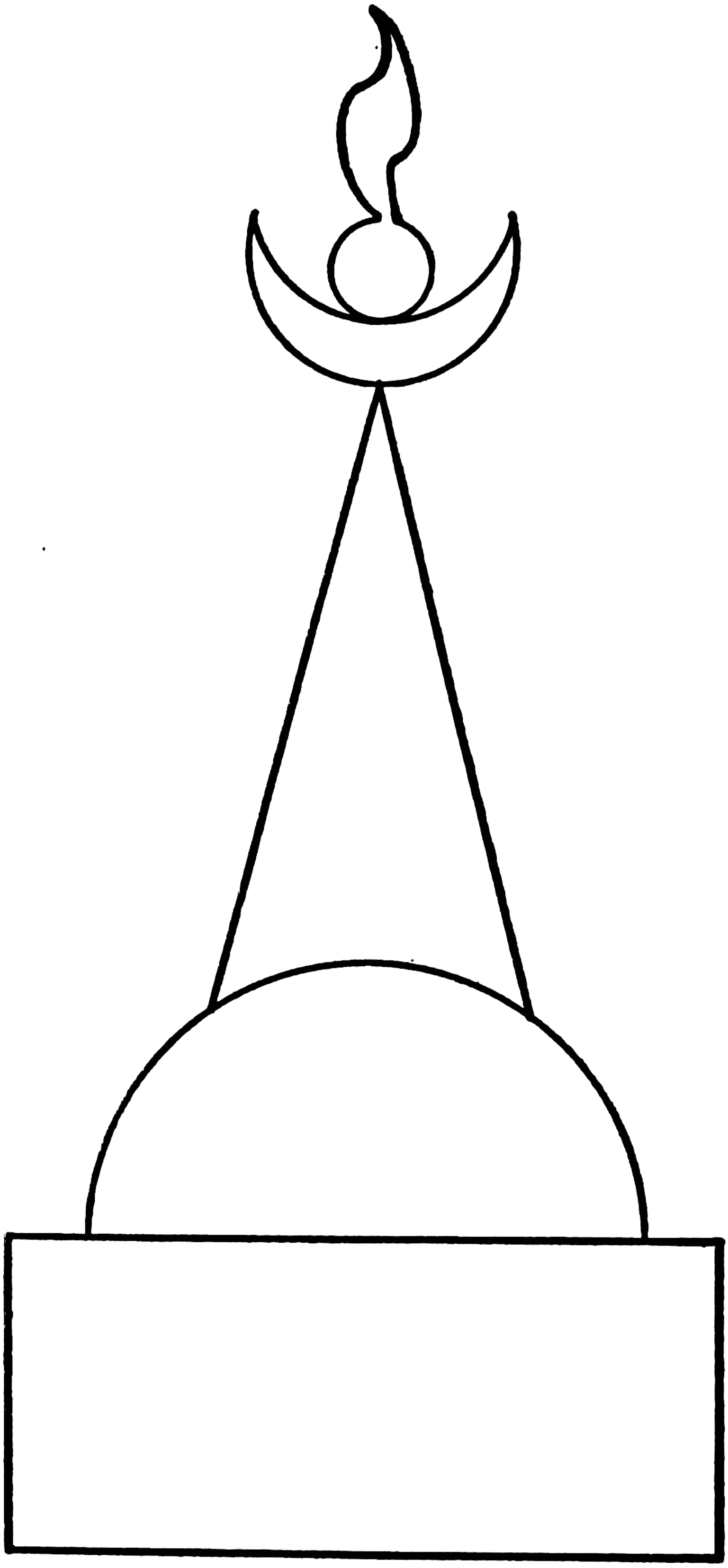


DIAGRAM OF FORMS IN HINDU TEMPLE

The long paragraphs in the Old Testament containing orders about how to erect the fire-altar for the worship of Jahweh, in all its many measurements, can be understood in their importance only if we are aware of this underlying cosmic symbolism. It is clearly expressed in a Sufi saying by Kabir "In this body is the Garden of Paradise; herein are comprised the seven seas and the myriad stars; here is the Creator manifest!"[1]

These practices and ideas are less remote from our present-day behaviour than we think. All art derives its basic meaning from this source and we are all artists in this respect; all primitive peoples were. Our own children show it to us in their daily games. They really try to create the universe anew—the small universe valid for them—whenever they build something with their blocks. They try to manufacture everything on earth in miniature, but yet intensively and in deep insight into the essentials, such as home life and school, railways, warfare, etc. They do that all the time either by applying ready-made tools for that purpose or just by changing the meaning of different objects in their imagination.

A very distinct parallel can be seen in their custom of preparing moss-gardens in the woods, particularly when they are unobserved. If we try to copy them in this, we will soon realize that we are far inferior to them, yet the attempt would teach us a lesson, because we would then be trying to do the same as the Indian Yogin does in preparing a Mandala. With many people who are still in a magic state of consciousness, such practices are the basis for ghost-invocations.

Whatever we build up with the little stones and fir-cones, flowers and birds' feathers and tree-bark will be nothing else than a reflection of our own soul in all its depths and abysses, which without such practices, are ordinarily inaccessible to us. The whole queerness of our personality, our ambitions, and the childish playfulness, will become visible in so far as we know how to decipher the hieroglyphs of our soul.

Is a Mandala, as the basic pattern of all art, only an imitation of the real world? By no means! The Mandala is simpler than the world, more orderly, more harmonious, more "beautiful" because it is more "ego-formed."

In India, Tibet and the Far East we find two types of painted

[1] Kabir I, 101 (as quoted in Tagore, 211).

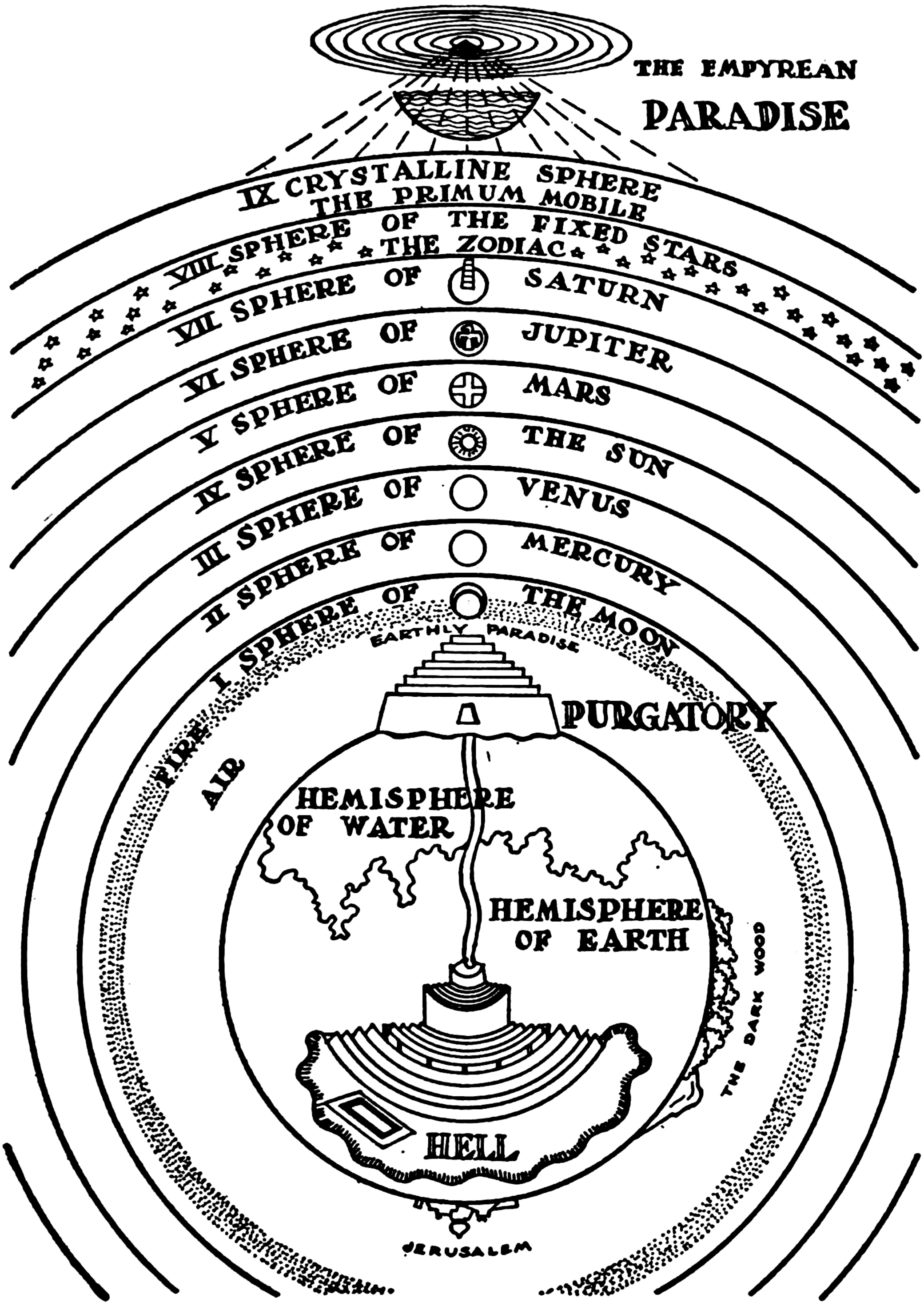
patterns which are means to be used as bodies into which to project our consciousness. The simpler type is called Yantra, that is, tool, implement, and consists of nothing but an abstract arrangement of lines, triangles, squares and circles. The other type, the Mandala, adds to such purely geometric designs pictures of many gods, Bodhisattvas, heroes and teacher-personalities, clouds, rivers and stars, forming together that universe of holiness into which we try to transform our being.

Meditation-figures of the Yantra-type can be found also in the Arabian world, in its mathematical, architectural ornamentation and particularly in the patterns of Oriental rugs. These abstract arrangements are, psychologically speaking, a product of "repression," theologically speaking, an expression for the iconoclastic trait in Islamic religion. Similarly, our own modern abstract art is an attempt to reveal the artistic will of the painter and to conceal his personal associations at the same time.

He who tries to express the unlimited character of holiness spreading throughout all existence will choose the open framework of the Yantra which leaves at all times the opportunity for adaptation to present circumstances. He, however, who realizes the necessity of pithas, thus trying to grow beyond iconoclastic negativism, will resort to Mandala-meditations where every angle of his consciousness-space is inhabited by a deity.

In a broader sense, all ornamentation, crystalline forms, window fillings of Gothic cathedrals, and architectural plans of gardens, temples, fortresses and towns, must be considered as Yantras, while a church used in worship-service, a garden in full bloom, and an actual town with inhabitants and functioning in its life-ways, must be considered as Mandalas.

All these artificial realities work as soul-mirrors. They are ultimately founded on that primitive instinct of mankind which tries to subjectify and thus to conquer the vastness of our surroundings, an instinct which expresses itself even when we scribble on paper or on the wall while talking on the telephone or sitting bored in a conference. We do that wholly unconsciously, unaware of the revealing power of those little sketches we are preparing. Today psycho-therapists of certain schools are very interested in the diagnostical character of such drawings and are encouraging their patients to make little sketches of their dreams and fantasies which may then be analyzed as re-



DANTE'S UNIVERSE

From Charles Linger, Studies in the History and Method of Science, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

flexes of undiscovered psychological complexes. C. G. Jung has published a number of drawings of patients which he compares with Mandalas in his edition of Richard Wilhelm's translation of a Chinese Buddhist meditation-text, called "The Secret of the Golden Flower."[1]

All these drawings from the Unconscious, whether drawn by modern Western neurotics or by Tibetan Yoga-masters who have been trained in this art through decades, have several things in common with each other: the framing line which gives a temporary limitation to our soul-adventures, the center as the concentration point of our self-awareness, and the subdivisions of the entire pattern which introduce a direction and the possibility of a distribution of our attention-power.

Painters of all schools claim that these are characteristics of all art. When the author went to see the Surrealist painter Max Ernst in his studio in Paris, this painter referring to his picture "The Nymph Echo," explained to him how he always starts his pictures by marking a point on the canvas which demands further a surrounding circle, then a still wider field of design, until the entire framework of the picture is developed out of what seems to him to be a geometric necessity. Not until this whole subconscious arrangement is completed does he discover that the original point is the eye and the two lines leading downward are the neck of a bird-like being sitting in a jungle, that is to say, the actual meaning of the whole picture is a product of a conscious fantasy added to, and springing out of, an unconscious pattern. Modern painters sometimes refer to what they call the "navel" of any picture, that is, the original point from which the entire structure of a painting is born.

We can see everywhere that a magic object, artificially created like a Mandala, represents at the same time a new piece of world-reality and a portrait of the human ego. This becomes obvious in the various conceptions of the "Homunculus." The magicians of Tibet, for instance, claim that they are able to create through their enormous concentration-power, phantoms which appear in their stead on other spots, and represent to other people the magicians themselves. It is said that these magically created men have even a certain degree of independence. We may understand this when we think about the

[1] *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1935.

CREATION OF DURGA BY THE JOINT
PROJECTION-POWER OF THE GODS

From a manuscript of the Devi-mahatmya

characters in dramas and novels, which too go their own ways and sometimes even surprise the author himself, who has worked almost unconsciously. In this connection we may define magic as extension of Self-effectiveness beyond its ordinary boundaries.

By preparing a Mandala of any kind, we are entering the power-sphere of the creative energies behind this world. This in turn, is a way of Self-realization. But the exaggerated clinging to such ceremonies may, on the other hand, become the fetter which hinders us in reaching the final pinnacle of development. This fact is frequently mentioned by the Buddha in his sermons. He says that belief in the effectiveness of rituals ties us to the world of mere appearance just as much as egoism, passion, craving for life, pride, unrest and unknowing.

After all, the miraculous effects which we might be able to attain through intended application of powers, would be minute and insignificant, in contrast to the great mystery of being which shows that our human ideas are overtowered by the impenetrability and invincibility of matter.

We should be cautious in all magic procedures not to empty our Self of its fullness or to deteriorate our world-conception. To know names and magic formulas for everything in the world is deepest blindness. Such a pseudo-knowledge would necessarily lead to a painful and superficial rational denial of true being in its overwhelming power. Solving a riddle, unfortunately, means getting rid of the riddle. Expressed in modern slang "you cannot eat your cake and have it too." Stripping the mysterious character from existence through reason and technic (for technic is only another form of magic), must always be counteracted by the infinite creative power of True Being, which is the Highest Miracle of all.[1]

[1] Parts of this and the preceding section of this chapter were published in earlier version in the author's book *Hatha-Yoga*, ed. by Rudolph, Dresden, 1936.

CHAPTER FIVE

ALCHEMY AS A WAY OF SALVATION

1. IS ALCHEMICAL ACTION POSSIBLE?

"This is true without doubt, certain and very sure: What is Below is like that which is Above. And which is Above is like which is Below. Thereby can the mysterious activity of everything be explained. And just as all things have been created by One according to the plan of One, thus all things are derived from this One by way of adoption.

"Its Father is the Sun, its Mother the Moon. The Wind carried it in its belly, its nurse is the Earth. It is the origin of all perfectness in the entire World; its power is complete, if it has become Earth.

"Divide the Earth from the Fire, the fine from the coarse, without tenseness and with mighty reason. It ascends from Earth, and gains the strength from the Above as well as of the Below. In this way you will possess the splendor of all the world; therefore all darkness will flee from you. That is the strong power of all powers, that triumphs over all subtle things and penetrates all firmness. In this way the world has been created and those are the miraculous affinities, whose ways have herewith been shown.

"Therefore I am called Hermes Trismegistos, the threefold Great one, who possesses the threefold wisdom of all the world. This finishes what I have said about the work of the Sun . . ."

The foregoing is a translation of the "Tabula Smaragdina." We can hardly imagine the enormous importance of those few sentences for the thinking of many centuries. It may well be that throughout the history of mankind no other single text has ever caused so much speculation as these dark words have

Even today many movements called Occultism or Pansophy or Biosophy and most of the magic of the Middle Ages, astrology and palmistry have their origin in the last analysis, in the

Tabula Smaragdina of Hermes Trismegistos. It has been a talisman, guiding the religious experiences and the philosophical views of many generations of men who considered themselves "Initiates," because in their longing and yearning they had found an awareness of the Miracle of Being, far beyond the usual dreamstate consciousness, in which the masses manage to take existence for granted and as a mere matter of course.

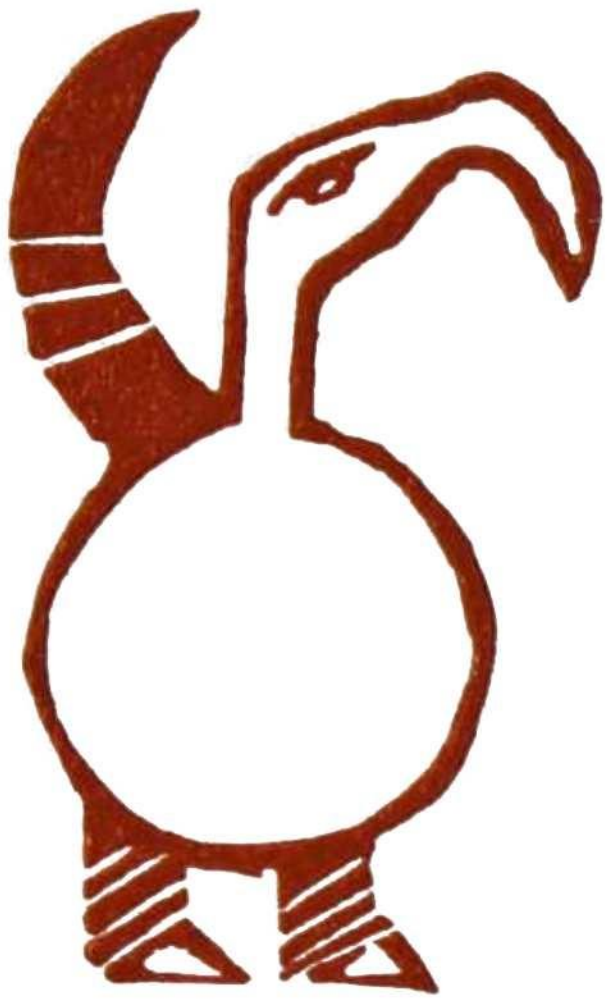
We know nothing about the origin of the Tabula Smaragdina or about that Hermes who is unanimously called its author. Even in the Middle Ages we find the doubt expressed that such a long text could ever have been written on a smaragd. However, it appears that in antiquity all stones of intensely green colour were called smaragd. Plinius e.g. reports that the Emperor Nero because of his weak eyes used to watch the displays in the sun-flooded circus arena always through a "smaragd"—thus the term Tabula Smaragdina may well refer to another kind of stone.

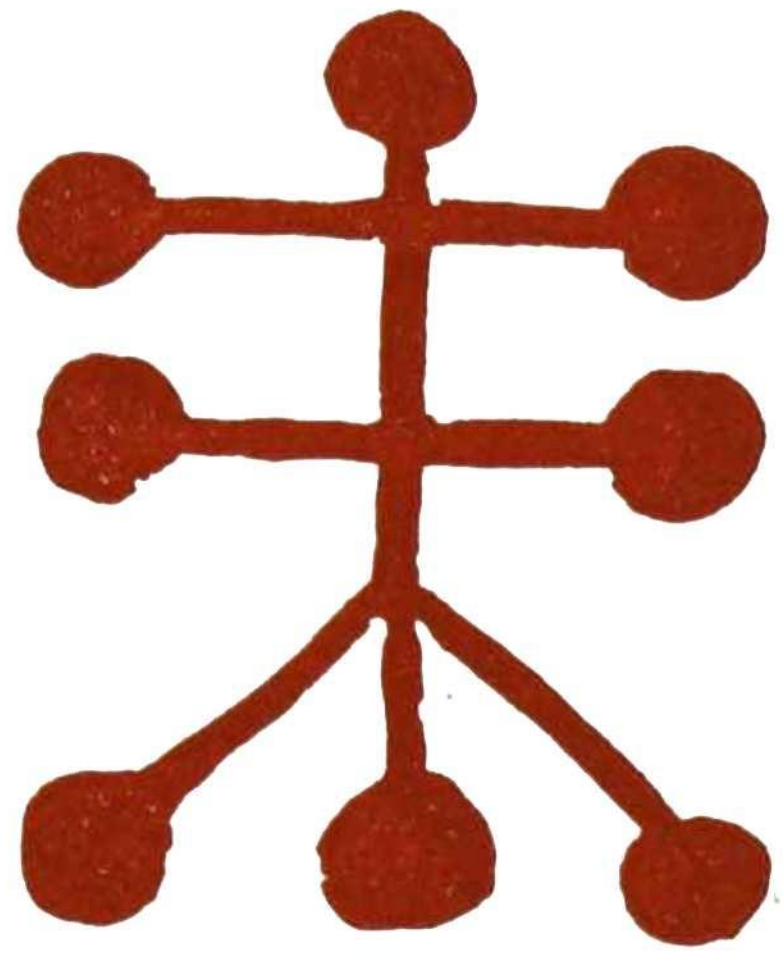
Gods always write on stone and not on perishable material. The Israelitic Tables of Testimony which Moses brought down from the mountain to his people had been "written with the finger of God" (Exodus 31, 18). The Koran too has been called "a glorious Koran written on well preserved stone tablets" (Sure 85, 22), and Nebuchadnezzar mentions in an edict the Babylonian Stone Tablets of Destiny.

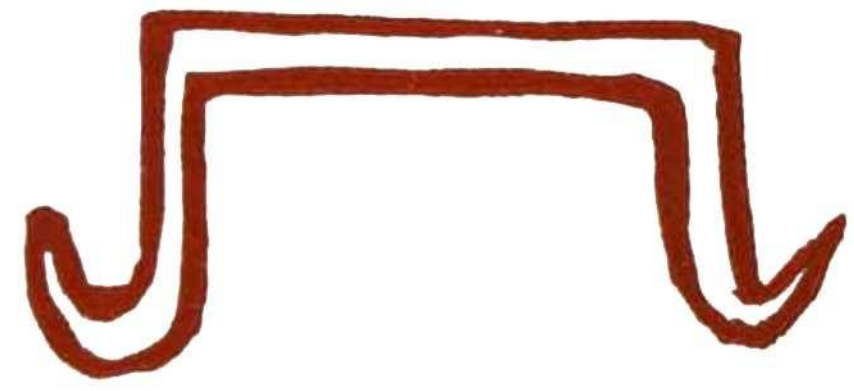
Arabic historians tell about an extremely old Egyptian temple, in which the statue of Aphrodite was kept underneath a cupola of red sulphur and surrounded by stones and metals. At the feet of the goddess, so they say, was a statue of Hermes made of Smaragd, presenting him in a sitting position and reading to the goddess from the book of wisdom.

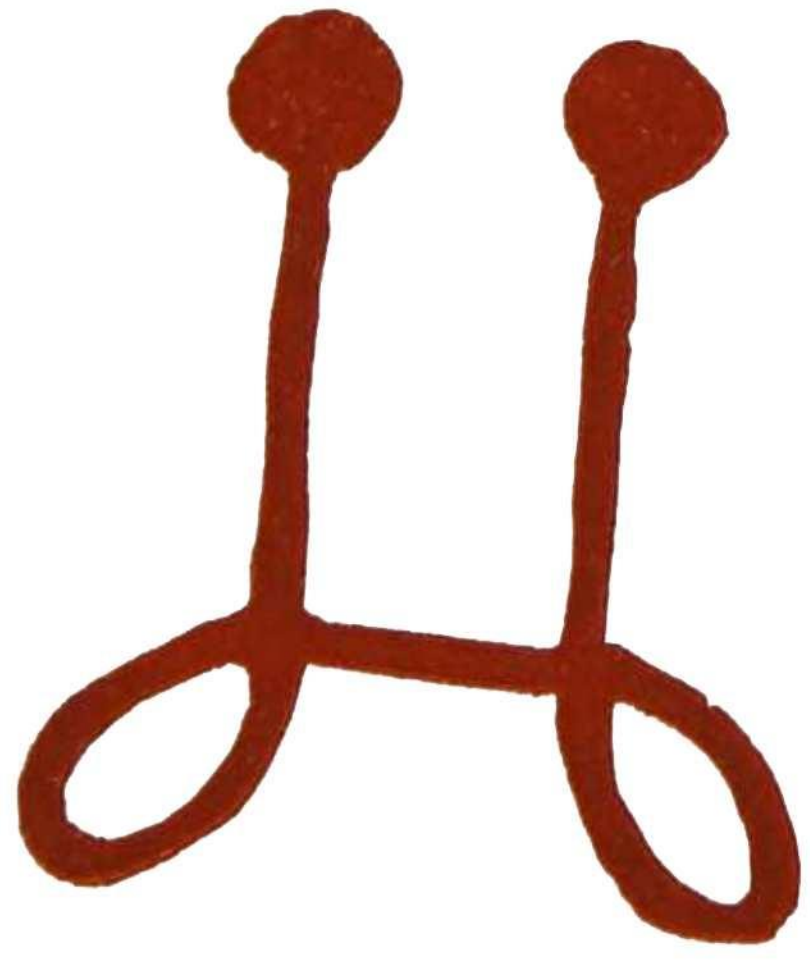
Who, then, was this Hermes, the threefold glorious one? Was he a god, a man, or both? The Greeks translated Thot, the Ibis-headed Egyptian god of wisdom into Hermes, just as later the Romans accepted the Greek Hermes as their Mercury.

Thot—Hermes—Mercury; they are related by being all guardians of the souls in the underworld and at the same time by being the keepers of secret wisdom. They watch the gates at the borderline between life and death, waking and dreaming, and finally they are all three the patrons of secret science and of the art of writing.









These signs are from The Book Raziel, *an old cabalistic text, printed in Amsterdam in 1701.*

Thot–Hermes is the great magician who keeps the keys to all the hidden treasures of wisdom, and who knows the spells by help of which man can attain the wealth of his subconscious depths.

Besides the God Hermes there is Hermes, a holy King of the remote past, who had the vision of events to come and built the pyramids to hide and preserve the sacred books and tablets of knowledge in their treasure-chambers throughout the days of the deluge.

Because of this old Arabic tradition, one of the Caliphs tried in 832 to open up one of the great pyramids "with fire and acids," but he did not succeed.

Besides the God Hermes and the ruler in the past who had the same name, there must have been an author by that name who can hardly have lived earlier than in the third century A. D. who composed or compiled the great hermetical scriptures, the so-called Codex Hermeticus.

These scriptures contain anything but Christian doctrine, yet we find a return of the great Hermes in early Middle Age folklore as St. Hermes, a Christian Saint and church patron.

Thus Hermes has become a symbolical name for the transmission of hidden wisdom, a name attributed throughout the millenniums to ever new divine, half-divine and human beings, a name that was applied whenever mankind felt enriched through revelations of formerly undisclosed knowledge.

To Hermes, who is generally considered the father of alchemy in the Western world, corresponds Nagarjuna in India. It seems strange that this Nagarjuna, too, is such a continuously recurring name that it is almost impossible for historical research to arrive at a date for that particular Nagarjuna who is said to have seen the alchemical secrets in dream-visions.

What we call alchemy is not only a Western phenomenon. We can find throughout mankind the attempt to produce gold through artificial transformation of matter and to discover a potion of longevity. We find such alchemical attempts among the ancient Mexicans, among Negro tribes in Central Africa, and in China as well as on Pacific islands.

The History of Alchemical World-Literature has not yet been written. It would have to be a very extensive volume, for the amount of alchemical scriptures is enormous and very likely

larger than the voluminous writings of officially recognized churches and schools.

Everything belonging to Hermetic wisdom has been treated first of all as heretical and then as superstitious by the official representatives of the Church and is nowadays usually called a dangerous subcurrent of the History of Religion. And rightly so; because alchemical, magical doctrines penetrate, wherever they arise, deep into folklore and settle particularly in subconscious realms which normally are only accessible in dreams.

We should beware, however, of underestimating the importance of this occult wave; these deep currents are frequently rapid and strong and in the long run far more powerful than visible surface movements.

Glancing over the uncharted wealth of alchemical literature we may well be stunned in the face of such a tremendous jungle of ideas and may feel actually in danger of being devoured by its swamps or of being carried away by unchecked waves of insanity. How far all this seems from the ethereal clarity and the logical reasoning of contemporary systems of official theology!

However, let us be careful! Perhaps the language of dogmatists in theology and philosophy was just as stubborn and farfetched in their age. But theological language has been studied and transmitted throughout the centuries, while the language of Alchemists has been so long suppressed and neglected in medieval studies that the meaning of its vocabulary has almost been forgotten.

Even the Alchemists themselves have aided this tendency to obscurity. The theologians and philosophers usually suffered from the inadequacy of their own language and its limited expressiveness, but the Alchemists on the other hand, enjoyed the darkness of their language and increased it deliberately, in order to keep their insights secret and inaccessible to profane onlookers.

Thus we cannot be surprised to find that, as a result, the masses of the uninitiated declared the alchemical doctrines nonsense, and that secular science turned completely away from them. The very term "Alchemy" was finally identified with those external arts, which the true Alchemists had always considered as shameful pseudo-alchemy. Modern science generally tells us that the only good that ever came out of Alchemy has

been its replacement by the true science of chemistry as an exact discipline for real knowledge, on the basis of which our modern technological age has developed.

That means that one considers Alchemy as nothing more than the Mother of Chemistry, after the advent of which, Alchemy completely lost its meaning and right to existence.

Let us try, for once, to turn the argument against the aggressor. We may say that alchemy was a divine science concerned with the ultimate mysteries of reality, attempting a transformation of matter and of all being into a higher form of existence.

What later on chemistry substituted for this cult was at bottom only a by-product of the real process and nothing but the all too secular misunderstanding of a holy purpose.

The true mother of chemistry is not alchemy, but rather the pseudo-alchemy of the cauldron-cooks. For chemistry, just like the older misinterpretations of alchemy, is concerned only with matter and not with the soul.

2. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PURPOSELESS ACTIONS

MOST OF THE THINGS we do have no purpose. We may find this statement too sweeping, but before dismissing it indignantly, let us consider first whether we really do or do not waste a great deal of time and energy on mere trifles. Very often we know quite well that we do, but in many cases we delude ourselves and act as if we are engaged in something useful, when in point of fact our actions are quite purposeless. That does not mean that we should do things always with a consciousness of purpose. Preaching of that sort will help no one. On the contrary, such an artificial and forced utilitarianism would inevitably lead to a completely cramped attitude to life. People who know exactly what they are doing, and who have considered and calculated every single thing in advance, are not exactly the most agreeable or most cheerful of our fellow-beings.

Such firm heroes of purpose, however, do not exist. Every one of us has been a child at some time and as a child one does everything without asking what advantage or utility it has. Fortunately, we do not quite lose this child-like state in later life. There is probably no one who would maintain that a child

makes sand-pies so as to obtain training for a future profession as pastry-cook. Nor does anyone seriously believe that we go walking in fields and forests where we can find nothing utilitarian, purely in order to exercise our lungs and stimulate the circulation of our blood, so that we may gather strength for ordinary utilitarian activities.

From all this we see that there is obviously something in life apart from mere utility; no matter what philosophers may claim to be the aim of human existence, it is by no means the only or the most important driving force in our life. It is wrong to inquire what the purpose of picking flowers is. We do not do such things to attain to something existing behind them, but for their own sakes. We certainly do not indulge in the habit of twiddling our thumbs as a gymnastic finger exercise to preserve the flexibility of our digits.

Let us admit then, that our life is not always devoted purely to utility. Let us free ourselves from this false fear of everything that cannot prove itself useful to our rational judgment. Why should we not be satisfied, if our innermost feeling, our "instinct," approves and likes to do a thing although to our intelligence it seems to be a useless game?

We can see this clearly in the Indian Raja-Yoga, as taught in the Bhagavadgita. Here the voice of the Lord instructs us that man's chief concern is to free himself from the constant desire for success and profit from his actions—that he must fulfill his duty, his tasks, here in this life without thinking of a reward for his good works. Actions that have no motive of gain, that are done purely for their own sake, alone lead to salvation. Is there, then, a meaning in purposeless actions?

Before we can answer this question we must first glance at the mode of conducting religious ceremonials, such as is usual in most religions. Thus, in the altar-service of the Catholic Church much time is taken up by ceremonial gestures; books are carried from left to right, vestments are put on and then taken off, vessels are brought and solemnly accepted, body movements are performed, knees are bent, heads lowered, hands clasped together, candles are lit and then extinguished, incense-burners are swung and holy water sprinkled. And all this takes place without any palpable gain, without any visible aim. These actions are obviously meaningful in themselves, even without "any-

thing resulting thereby." Yet it must give us cause to reflect when we see, for instance, the learned monks of the Benedictine order spending several hours every day in carrying out the details of the Mass as correctly as possible.

This and similar religious ceremonials have been performed throughout the whole world for centuries. Long before man consciously reflected upon the Godhead, he honoured It by sacrificial ceremonies. The custom of making sacrifices which is widespread in the history of religion, does not really signify, as the name usually leads us to believe, an offering of valuable things to the Divine Being who has demanded them and would be angry without them. Rather it is that man, by performing the "sacrifice" and all the actions connected with it, tries himself to act as an almost divine creative personality. The world, as it lies before us, is still raw material and has not been quite completed; it must be brought to completion; that which it lacks must be supplied, and in this way it will be made a fit habitation for human life.

Collaboration in the divine creation of the world—that is the meaning of most of the religious cults and ceremonies. There is no other purpose, no striving for any reward behind them, but much, much more: the desire of men to become God-like. No man, not even a primitive man, is prepared to recognize the world as completed and to accept it as it is. Man seeks to compete with the gods and their power; he constantly wants to prove to himself and to others that he also has creative power, or at least magical power.

All this is shown by the fact that no normal person succeeds in being always idle and in living without productive activity. No one is satisfied with himself or with life, who cannot employ his powers and feel that he is active and creating. The mere enjoyment of existing beauties cannot really satisfy us, and in the same way we will not be content with understanding and penetrating the world and life merely with our minds. All knowledge becomes a true possession for us only if we employ it and can grasp it bodily.

In the development of human culture, the period of religious sacrifice was gradually succeeded by philosophical reflection. Instead of trying to make himself master of the world by ceremonial actions, man now sought to conquer it by thought. In-

stead of trying to project himself into the fullness of earthly existence with the whole of his spiritual and bodily being, he sought to do it only with his mind, that is to say, to comprehend it with only a part of the human entity. This, in the long run, could not be sufficient. Protest was raised against it quite early and resulted in man turning from a partial consideration to the whole once again.

Alchemy developed as the attempt to master the material side of earthly existence; it was a philosophizing with the hand, instead of merely with the head; a perception through the body, instead of merely through the mind; an artificial process of world creation in the retort.

Our so-called "purposeless actions," that is to say, everything we do without any utilitarian aim, are a misunderstood result of alchemistic activity. Every art that is pursued today for its own sake instead of having some aim in view, is at bottom an heir of alchemy.

The significance of our purposeless actions, therefore, can only be grasped if we know something about alchemy. And conversely, our own purposeless actions can serve as a connecting link if we now proceed to examine the aims and activities of the alchemists.

3. THE MYSTERY OF THE BIRTH OF MATTER

THE GODS MADE THE WORLD out of the body of a slain dragon —so say the myths of most peoples. The substance of that world in which we live was first produced in its present form in the prehistoric struggles of gods and demons. First there was chaos, then arose the cosmos, the planned universe.

Mythical tales of this sort are really concerned with man and his nature, and not with gods, devils, heaven and earth. But the sagas cannot describe the origin of man in their own language, except as a struggle between lower and higher powers.

In the same way the alchemists are really concerned with the soul and its development, and not with material gold or quicksilver. But they cannot experience the rise of the inner powers of the soul except in matter and its transformation in the retort. It is not the fact that our body has a soul that seems to them

wonderful or noteworthy, but the contrary: the fact that our soul has a body, a body formed from matter, from water, fire and metallic substances, is for them the greatest of miracles, worthy to be venerated and to serve as the basis of a religion—the religion of alchemy.

No inner process of development, no thought or feeling is regarded by the alchemist as complete so long as it remains only in the sphere of the soul. Our thinking and striving become reality only when they appear corporeally in matter, and lead to the transformation of outwardly visible, palpable earthly figures. "His power is complete when it has become earth," says the Tabula Smaragdina. That the earth is there, that things are tangible and given us in a definite material form, that life is subject to inexorable laws of nature which no god or spirit may violate: this certainly is the real foundation of alchemy.

It does not seek for the doubtful miraculous phenomena of an occasional breach of the laws of nature, or for an incorporeal existence of a spiritual entity. It is not at all interested in spirits as free as the air, or in angelic beings without bodies and without palpable existences. Alchemy means examining and experiencing the miraculousness of matter and of the earth. It does not seek a World Beyond of purely spiritual beings, but the "stone" in all its hardness and reality.

This explains the interest of the alchemists in the origin of the external world. They know from experience that nothing real can arise from nothing, but that a substance can only be formed from another by transformation. Therefore they refer to those myths of creation in the history of religion which tell how divine powers formed heaven and earth from the corpse of some original demon or demoness. In these sagas it appears that the substance of our world is in essence black, of demoniac quality, and that it requires a transformation-process to purify it and lead it towards the light. Alchemy seeks to achieve this process. "Separate the earth from fire, the fine from the coarse," says the Tabula Smaragdina. The gods also, so the Indian myths tell, once busied themselves in this way as alchemists.

In order to obtain the Elixir of Life, they decided to churn up the World Ocean, the Sea of Milk, so that the life-juice it contained would be deposited as solid masses of butter. The mighty World-mountain was uprooted, the World-serpent used

as a rope to tie around it, and then the gods and the demons pulled at its head and tail for centuries thus churning up the Sea of Milk with the World-mountain. During this process animals and plants fell from the mountain into the sea. Through the vital power of these things the fluid mass finally coagulated into a cream, the living things in it caused it to ferment, and Ambrosia resulted—the intoxicating drink which filled everyone with eternal life and power. The juice of every plant of the earth had flowed into it, and as the churning went on, the creamy essence of the whole Universe solidified as butter on the surface of the ocean. There resulted the creation of the new substance of a new world!

The forces of life arose from the sea as symbolical figures; shining brightly and decked in white, the moon lifted itself out of the flood; the Goddess of Happiness and Beauty, the Goddess of Intoxication, the pale-coloured horse of the flight of thought and the Tree of Desire of the Blessed came forth.

But no alchemistic process takes place without danger or without dark, poisonous by-products. Whilst the Elixir of Life was forming on the surface and a new, bright world was arising, a fearful fire raged in the depths of the sea which threatened to darken and poison everything with its fumes. It burst forth from the middle of the sea, bluish-black, fiery, gigantically filling the space between the worlds. Snakes and insects, and poisons of every kind sprang from it in masses, and the beings who glimpsed this horror dissolved to nothing through terror.

The original envy and hatred of beings took shape in this fiery poison and then also threatened the highest of the gods, just after the actual success of the churning of the Sea of Milk was in sight and immortality and all blessings seemed to have been gained. Shrinking with fear, the gods turned to Shiva, the foremost and most dread god, the Lord also of death and demonism. They reached his lofty mountain home and told him of their sorrows and of their impotence in face of the Evil Thing that they themselves had called into existence. Where, they asked, would come their succour from the dark power of their own will? How could they hope to share in the Light and Salvation of the alchemistic Elixir-preparation without being destroyed by the dangers of the process? Only Shiva could help them. He, the invincible, who was exalted above all differences

of night and day, of light and darkness, good and evil, descended and drank the dark, burning poison out of his left hand.

After that, the churning of the sea was cheerfully continued and the Elixir of Life obtained. The divine physician kept it in a white shell, the gods enjoyed it, and filled with strength, then conquered all the demon hordes. The dark powers of the depths had to hide themselves in the Sea of Salt Water. The World-mountain was then set in its place, in the midst of a renewed, transformed world.

The substance from which the world was made, has dark matter within it, alongside the light. This is stated also in the "Sunflower of the Philosophers," a late alchemistic writing: "The substance from which our stone will be prepared is a simple unimportant thing, despised, since not the least beauty can be discerned in it. It is precisely the substance from which God in the beginning created heaven and earth, namely out of chaos and clods. Take these clods and treat them just as God did in the beginning, in the creation of heaven and earth."

We must transform the earth, purify and clarify the substance. We cannot indeed do this like the gods, that is to say, create an entirely new Universe and, as it were, achieve the transformation by churning the original sea. We can carry out the work assigned to us only on a small scale. We can purify and change ourselves. But even that, according to alchemist ideas, cannot take place as a purely inner, spiritual process, but only through working on the substance. We renew ourselves only by changing the things around us. The alchemist must, as it were, take his Ego in his hands; he must feel it in the substance with which he is dealing. He must identify himself in feeling with the materials which he is preparing and which he boils and melts. Then by succeeding with his alchemistic work, by producing the "stone," his Ego will also achieve a higher and better form.

Every process of transformation must take place in silence, away from the bustle of the outside world. The maturing must take place without disturbance. Therefore, the myths tell us, the germinating world was enclosed in an eggshell and was hatched out by the divine powers before it came to birth. For the same reasons, every man who feels a strong inner development going on within him, feels the need of cutting himself off

from society, and of becoming what he is to become in seclusion and isolated tranquility.

The alchemist, too, separates the substance which he wishes to transform, from the rest of the world. He puts it into a retort and "hatches" it by the heat of a stove. The apparatus of an alchemist is, as it were, the protective eggshell, the body of his will to transform.

4. THE MYSTERY OF TRANSFORMATION

WE MUST ALWAYS DISTINGUISH in life between what we really want, and what we think and say we want. No one in the world knows himself so well as to have a proper idea of his own innermost desires.

What the alchemists really wanted we have already tried to explain, but if we question the alchemists themselves, then we get an entirely different answer. The Arabic writer Fihrist tells us that a certain prince of the Ummeiad Dynasty was the first Arabic alchemist. This prince himself states that the real aim of his alchemistic arts was the attainment of wealth and power, and such did indeed remain the outwardly visible driving-force of alchemistic work throughout the centuries.

The shoemaker Jakob Boehme, the great Protestant Mystic, saw behind this greed for power and money the real meaning of alchemy in the hermetical purification of all being. In a letter of 1622 he wrote to an alchemist who was obviously not quite clear about the deeper meaning of his research, the following sentences:

"The master should not wish, therefore, to concern himself with gold or minerals, it is all false; it requires the very best in heaven and in the world, of above and below, of that which is far and near; the abode is everywhere to be found, but not everyone is fitted for it; nor does it cost money, nor has it anything to do with time and the nourishment of the body, otherwise anyone could prepare it for two guilders or less. The world must again be transformed into heaven and the heaven into world."

There can be no clearer statement of what the true alchemist must seek behind all the greed and bustle for gold. It is the retro-

gressive wandering of our powers of will and thought which strive upwards and then, enriched by the forces of the higher reality, must again descend into the hard substance of this world of ours below. "It ascends from earth to heaven and then descends to earth, thus acquiring the power above and the power below" (Tabula Smaragdina).

The meaning and mystery of life do not lie visibly on the surface; they must be discovered by effort, by a journey above or below. The old Persian ascends to heaven in order to conquer immortality and light in the spheres above the clouds. The Egyptian, on the other hand, descends into the underworld of the tombs to achieve the same purpose.

The alchemist feels heaven and underworld to be in himself; he makes his substances and liquids rise and fall in his apparatus, simmer and cool, and simultaneously feels his own powers of soul make corresponding movements and condense into a new and higher state.

After all, man himself is Nature's best and most important laboratory where the purification and sublimation of earthly matter is in process. Such is the doctrine of Manichaeism, the religious system of the Persian Mani, who lived in the third century A. D., and died by crucifixion. Light, so taught Mani, shone into the darkness and dissolved itself in it, wasting itself upon it. Through this is lost its original strength and became more and more swallowed up by the elements of darkness and evil. In order to save it, man was created as a helper by the messenger of the Supreme God of Light, so that by his living and striving he should gather together again the scattered, powerless particles of light and lead them upwards.

Without knowing it, therefore, we are God's fellow-workers in the redemption of the world and the liberation of the good. This is accomplished in us and through us, for our whole spiritual and bodily being is a distilling apparatus. The food that we consume contains mingled within it the forces of heaven and hell, of light and darkness. Through the digestive process it is split up into its different constituents. The dark strives towards the earth; the light, however, is transformed in us into spiritual power and good thoughts, which ascend to the bright Divine Being.

God Himself practices alchemy. According to this view He

carries out a distillation process in which He uses our body as a retort. These ideas of Manichaeism became astonishingly widespread throughout the Christian world; but they also penetrated far into the East and influenced Persian, Islamic, Indian, Tibetan and Chinese philosophy to a very high degree.

One can almost say that alchemy is the practical side, the religious ceremonial of the Manichaeian religion, for wherever in the world the doctrines of Mani, which we have just described, made their way, we see simultaneously the appearance of alchemy.

5. THE CIRCULATION OF LIQUIDS

MAN PRACTICES ALCHEMY with the substances and secretions of his own body; that is very clearly to be seen from the methods developed by Manichaeism in combination with Indian Yoga-practices and Chinese nature-mysticism.

Mani did not think much of Nature and its laws. He considered it to be diabolical, therefore he thought it was pernicious for men to follow the course of Nature. Man could rather fulfill his task only if he went backwards along the path of world-creation by bending and deflecting the force of Nature. From conceptions such as these arose a whole system of alchemistic working on the human body. In the Western world the work of purifying matter was begun by smelting stones and metals in an oven heated by the application of fire. In the Eastern world, however, the alchemistic process of purification was begun in the substance of the human body itself; here attempts were made to stop and divert the natural streams of liquids and forces. The inner fire of life was used as the impulse for the transformation of matter.

This method had already been developed in the 8th century in Chinese alchemy. An ancient book describes how one must regulate one's breath and seminal flow so that the most important forces of life shall not stream away uselessly, or perhaps even dangerously, but shall in some way be able to find use as the driving impulse for the process of transforming our Ego and our material selves.

In the author's book "Hatha-Yoga," it is described in detail

how a person versed in Yoga makes the essential force of the breath in the interior of his body ascend, and how finally breath and life-consciousness force their way out at the highest point of the head, over the bodily frame, and glow upwards into the upper world as a flame of the soul.

It is characteristic that the same idea has also happened to express itself, in a pictorial manner, in the occult thought of the Western world. The pentecostal flame which is often represented in old paintings and church-windows over the heads of the disciples gathered around Jesus, is in form an illustration of the highest Yoga aim.

In the ancient Chinese text referred to, the retrogressive movement of the seminal flow is also taught, in addition to the transformation of the breathing process. It says:

"The meaning of this doctrine rests entirely upon the retrogressive method. The heart of man stands under the sign of fire. The flame of the fire strives upwards. If the two eyes regard the things of the world, then this is a looking that is directed outwards. If, then, we close our eyes and reverse our glance, then that is the retrogressive method. The force of sexuality stands under the sign of water. When the desires are active, then it flows downwards, directed outwards and taking effect outside. If at the moment of release it is not allowed to flow out, but is conducted back by the power of thought so that it forces its way upwards into the vessel of the creative part of us and refreshes and nourishes heart and body, then that is likewise the retrogressive method. Therefore it is said: The idea of the Elixir of Life rests entirely upon the retrogressive method."

From close and exact study of the old Asiatic Yoga-texts in their original language, we know that the semen, which is to flow backwards and upwards, does not simply mean male sperm, and in the same way the breath, which is to be stored up "in the vessel of the body," does not mean simply physical air. In both cases it is rather the inner force of those substances that is meant, both of the liquids and of the wind in the human body. Besides this, the words and names of Yoga writings never refer to the "coarse body," but to the bodily sensations that belong to it.

6. THE ALCHEMISTIC ART OF HEALING

AN OLD CHINESE MANUSCRIPT has a sub-title called: "The art of prolonging human life."

This expresses the result that was expected from the reversal of the movements of nature in the human body. When the Marigold, the force of all forces within us, has been found, then everything will be "changed into gold"; it will be the finding of the "Philosophers Stone" and the obtaining of the Elixir which heals all disease and gives immortality.

At all times and throughout the world men have tried to liberate themselves from the inexorable power of death. Actually they wanted to achieve the eternity of their lives, really complete immortality. But usually they satisfied themselves in practice with obtaining a temporary prolongation of earthly life—a postponement of death for a long time means almost as much for the simple consciousness as the conquest of death.

Since our Ego is bound to the body and our body consists of matter, immortality had to be found in the form of a substance and be administered to the body. Thus in the old Babylonian Gilgamesh epic, the hero searches for the plant of immortality. He finally finds it after great struggles in his wandering in worlds beyond and in the dim past; then he loses the priceless plant on his return journey, through a little carelessness when bathing.

This means: Man can only temporarily enjoy the dream of immortality; it does not remain present for all time; it passes away and dissolves again into the ordinary things of everyday existence which unnoticeably draw us beneath their sway.

It is told of the Chinese Emperor, Shi-Hoang-Ti, in the 3rd century B. C., that he fitted out a whole fleet which he sent to the distant mythical Islands of the Blessed to fetch the plant of immortality. These islands, which are no longer accessible to men living today, lie in the farthermost part of the Eastern ocean. The houses and palaces of its inhabitants are made of purest gold and silver. But the fleet sent thither never returned.

Chinese alchemists still venerate today the old philosopher Lao-tse, their patron saint, about whom legend has woven itself. Lao-tse lived about 600 B. C. According to the writings of the alchemists, he achieved the highest substance of power in "Tao,"

of which it is said: "for him who obtains it, nothing is impossible." Lao-tse himself, we are told, so far perfected himself in magic that he succeeded in obtaining immeasurable quantities of gold. He is said to have prolonged his own life to 1040 A. D. by his art, and then to have gone to the West in a cart drawn by blue oxen, to be born again in India as a Buddha.

The great Chinese Emperors, particularly, were supposed to have been experts in alchemy. It is said of Emperor Wu-ti (c. 100 B. C.), that he gathered dew that had fallen from heaven in a shell, which a statue standing before his palace held in its hand. From this dew he prepared a drink of immortality by adding finely powdered precious stones. Similar "drinks of immortality," which obviously contained some strong poison, were responsible for the deaths of four Chinese emperors between the years 800 and 860—alchemists had prepared them an Elixir of Life from sulphur and quicksilver, to which valuable pearls had been added.

In the oldest times it was exclusively plants from which attempts were made to obtain a life essence by pulverizing or brewing them; only in relatively late times were metallic substances melted and mixed in order to make the secret water of life, the aurum potabile, or drinkable gold.

We can clearly see this development of the alchemistic process in the Tibetan "Stories of the 84 Magicians." In the earlier tales it is said that the magician prepared the "Drink of Long Life" in the midst of a dense forest where he gathered the necessary plants. Later much money was required to make such an elixir; it had to be prepared in retorts, from quicksilver and all sorts of other metallic powders.

For a long time, so runs the last story, the rich Brahmana Vyali endeavoured in vain to prepare the elixir; he still lacked a certain substance which the recipe-books declared to be essential—a mysterious red berry. But he really did not understand how to interpret these occult prescriptions properly, and only accident revealed to him the secret hidden in them. Thus, when the mudra (woman co-operating with him in his Yoga practices) was taking a bath one day, she cut her finger. The red drops of blood that oozed out dropped into Vyali's medicament, and in this way he succeeded in his great work! The drink that resulted gave the Brahmana and his mudra immortality, nay

even the horse which was standing nearby and accidentally tasted some of the elixir, became immortal.

Afterwards, the same elixir also proved itself useful for ennobling metals and transforming them into gold. Usually, however, this practice is reversed, according to the prescription of the legendary Nagarjuna, of whom the following saying has come down to us:

"Quicksilver is always to be used with the body, as with metal; it has the same effects, whether it penetrates the body or metal. It should first be tried on metal, and then applied to the body."

The famous traveller Marco Polo reported in the 13th century about certain priests in southern India who had reached an age of 150 to 200 years, because they enjoyed a drink of quicksilver and sulphur twice a month.

That which was beyond the reach of heroes and rulers, the alchemist sought to achieve through his work. The Yogin, as an Eastern alchemist, sought to raise the secretions of his body that were filled with life-force, into a substance of higher rank by condensation and sublimation, so that finally his body, completely filled with such secretions and elixirs, would itself become a vessel of immortality, no longer belonging to this coarse world, but exalted to a higher and better level of reality.

The alchemist, the Western Yoga practitioner, brewed and boiled acids and metals in his crucible in order to obtain a medicine which would overcome death. He was really not concerned with remedies for all kinds of diseases; what he really had in mind was something more—it was immortality itself as the unconditionally highest remedy.

What the alchemist in fact achieved, were very many preparations which have partly been taken over into present-day pharmaceutical science as medicines. We must ask ourselves: How much of the old alchemistic striving has remained still alive today within the modern art of healing? Medical science on the one side, endeavours more and more to free itself from the old religious and occult ideas which have been branded as "superstition" and rejected. But on the other hand, doctors realize today that they have to reckon with the existing "superstitious" ideas of the people, that the alchemistic ideas are still widely alive even today and cannot be dismissed with a wave

of the hand. Indeed, doctors even utilize them as a welcome means of suggestion; their healing power is by no means lessened by the fact that they ought actually to be ineffective if measured by purely chemical standards.

Apart from this, present-day medicine has clearly made great progress as compared with the old alchemy. The Tabula Smaragdina said that the fine should be separated from the coarse, "gently and sensibly." Strangely enough, however, it is just these clear words of the old hermetical prescription which have all too often been completely disregarded. The alchemistic process of the transformation of matter and its refinement into a finer being, usually took place in a manner which was truly anything but "suaviter," that is, loving, gentle and tender, and in which reason was only too often missing. Attempts were made to outrage nature often with an almost brutal lack of consideration, in order to force it to surrender its secrets and to acquire its forces for selfish use. Goethe makes Faust reject this sort of blackmailing of nature, with the following words:

"Unfathomably by light of day, Nature will permit no one to steal her veil . . . What to your spirit she will not reveal, with

The modern art of healing has also now come around to this view and no longer seeks to combat disease violently with dangerous poisons. It avoids the unnecessary hostility against existing conditions and lets Nature herself take control and complete the process of healing. "Gentleness"—this old hermetical prescription has become the watchword of the whole field of the modern science of curing nervous disorders.

In a corresponding manner the Asiatic world too has gradually turned away from the many unnatural features of certain Yoga-methods, and people there seek to conceive of themselves as a part of nature, and in harmony with universal conditions.
lever and screw you cannot wrest away."

7. THE PHILOSOPHERS' STONE

THE MAN WHO HAS RECOGNIZED his true nature in harmony with the laws of the celestial world above and with those of the world of earthly matter below, has found the Philosophers' Stone, for he now holds in his hands the key which will enable

him to transform his Ego so that it may rise from out of its lethargy and delusion into divine life.

The alchemist looks at this developmnt of his own soul in the mirror of material reactions, therefore he calls the real knowledge which he seeks to achieve, a stone. Basil writes the following verses about it:

"A stone will be found, it is not dear, from which a flickering fire is drawn, of which the stone itself is made, being composed of white and red; it is a stone and yet not a stone, Nature alone is active in it, causing a clear little spring to flow from it."

These lines are commented on in detail in a little book called "The Sun from the East," which first appeared in 1783, but the commentaries are difficult to understand for men of today. Therefore we shall try to explain the above in the language of our own time.

"A stone will be found, it is not dear."

This first line means that the alchemists' raw material need by no means be a particularly precious, rare substance, but that any given conditions which we find at hand are sufficient in all circumstances as a point of departure. The reality of our soul and the world in which we have been placed, need not be purchased and acquired at great cost, even if it is, viewed from a higher plane, the most precious and the most noble thing to which we could ever attain.

"From which a flickering fire is drawn."

This means that reality around us bears in itself transforming-fire and that this fire leaps out to us flickeringly as soon as we recognize the spirit in which and through which the Universe exists. Just as the flint must already have borne within itself the sparks that fly from it when it is struck, so does our soul also contain the power for its own transformation and purification. We need not approach the world and the soul with external implements and strange powers in order to achieve the alchemistic process of purification.

"Of which the stone itself is made."

The power dormant in us for the exaltation of our own being is a part of our being. Existing reality which we use as a point of departure for all work, is no dead substance but conceals within itself the motive-power for transformation, or as the theologians express it—we have not to deal in this world with a

reality that is peaceful within, but with a reality that is in ferment and is striving to rise above itself.

"Being composed of white and red."

This tells us more about the constituents of which our world and our Ego consist. This existence is not a unity, but has arisen from the interaction of completely opposed forces. White and red, semen and blood must interact, in order to create a being; male and female do not produce the shape of worldly being until they are united. The alchemists express this by saying that the forces of the sun and the moon, or of the metals corresponding to them, must react together in order to achieve the Great Work and produce a new and transformed life.

In this way arises, from the mineral standpoint, the Philosophers' Stone; but from the spiritual standpoint, the result is the new man, the *homunculus*, as an *hermaphrodite*, who bears within himself the properties of male and female in equal proportions.

"It is a stone and yet not a stone."

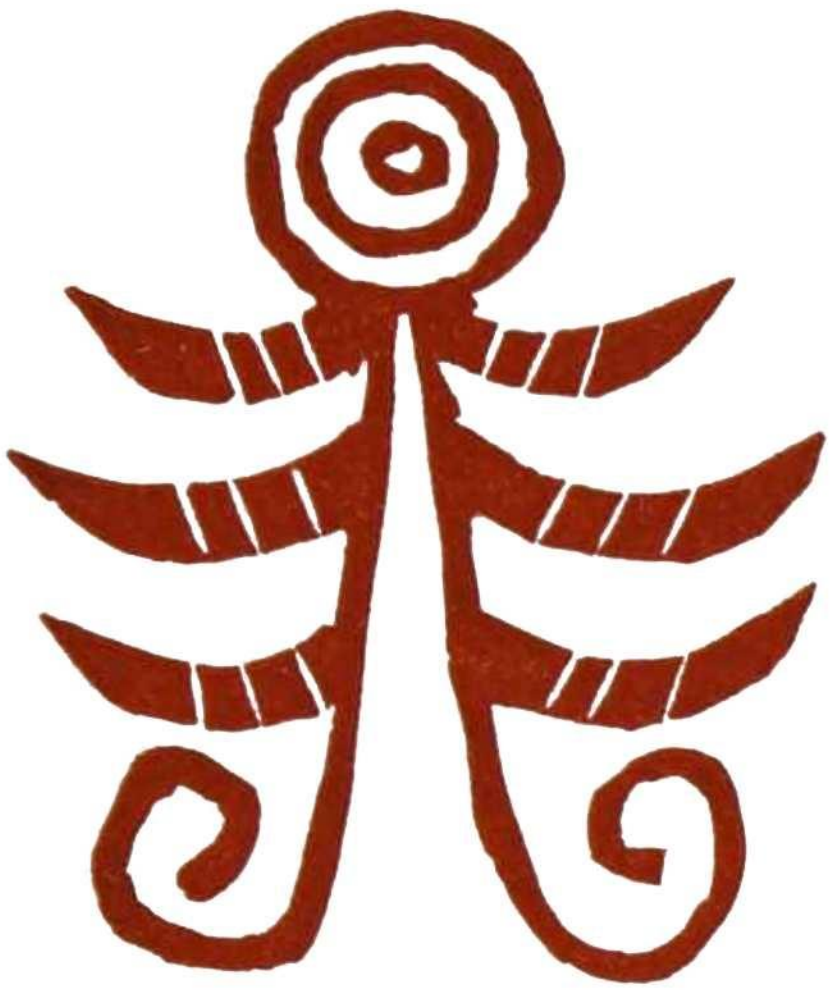
This statement is intended to warn us from considering the world as we see it in everyday life, to be good and holy without more ado. It is true that it contains the sparks of the transforming fire, that its existence is in ferment; but only the holy glance of the higher man in us is capable of perceiving these forces in matter. The alchemists express this idea symbolically by calling the Stone "soft"; the Stone—the substance of this world of ours —is not quite hard and impenetrable, but on the other hand, neither is it liquid so as at all times, of itself as it were, to flow and change into the right forms. It is the task of men to give it form by alchemistic processes.

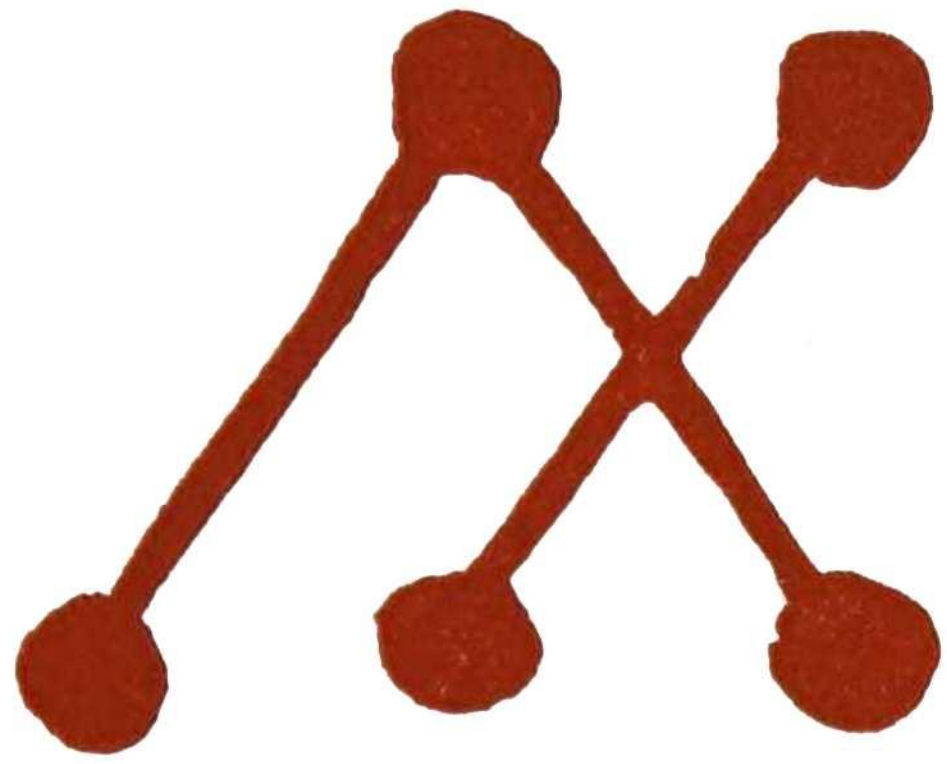
"Nature alone is active in it."

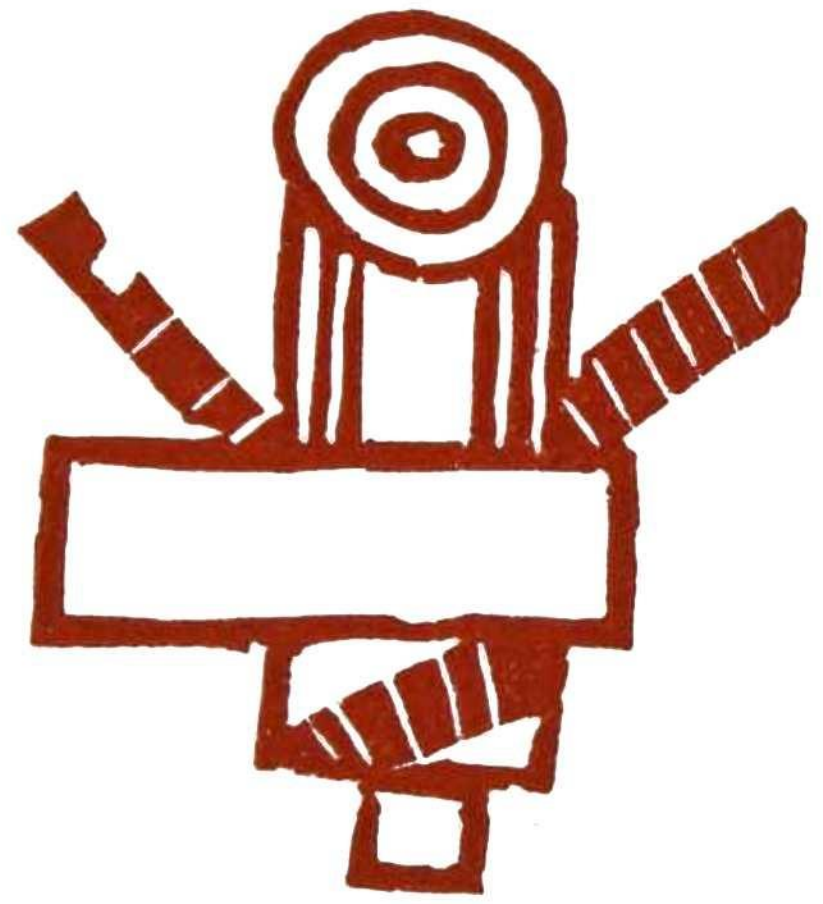
Even the alchemist in the end cannot do otherwise than let nature work in things. Everything that we undertake against nature must necessarily lead to evil. To this extent even the process of the purification and refinement of our existence into holy clarity and pure light is really not accomplished by ourselves through our own power and free will; it is rather an objective process, which we can only bring to *consciousness* by all our doing and activity, and by the great alchemistic work.

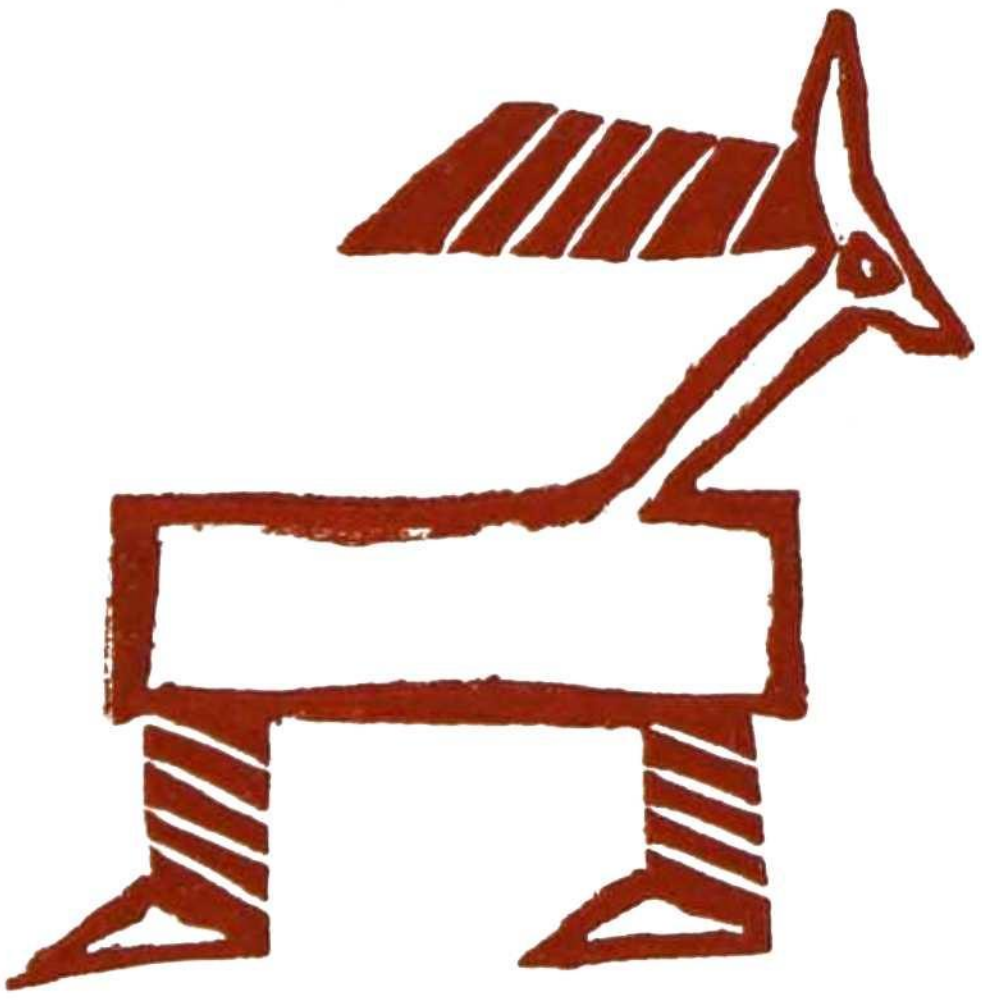
"Causing a clear little spring to flow from it."

The stone that we have found is not intended to remain stone.









These signs are from The Book Raziel, *an old cabalistic text, printed in Amsterdam in 1701.*

It is intended to be fruitful in moulding the new and higher life. Just as water is drawn from the rock by striking it with the magician's wand, so must the newly acquired form of existence of transformed and purified man become a source of power for many. For attaining this, of course, a sacrifice is necessary, for as long as the stone is not broken it can let nothing stream out from itself. The alchemists therefore, usually speak of fermentation, even of decay and dissolution, which must set in before the highest form of the new life can be attained. We can most clearly express what is meant here by a quotation from the Bible:

"Verily, verily I say to you: except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal" (John 12: 24, 25).

8. THE DIFFERENT ELEMENTS

WHOEVER HAS ATTAINED the One Great Thing, no longer needs multiplicity. Whoever has obtained the Stone no longer needs the different elements, for the Stone is the most precious thing there can be, although it has apparently been produced from the meanest substance in the everyday world which lies to our hand.

In many fairy-tales we are told that in our search for the highest wisdom and the greatest treasures, we must not let ourselves be dazzled by rare precious things which lie piled up in the treasure caves, but that we must pass unwaveringly through all such enticements until we find the highest good in something that seems quite insignificant.

In the Turkish folk-lore book of the 40 Viziers, there is an alchemistic tale of this kind which runs as follows:

The famous Brahmana Padmanaba finds in Damascus the young son of an innkeeper, Hassan; he wins his love and wants to teach him his art. He condutcs him outside the city to a spring of water. The Brahmana makes the water disappear with a paper inscribed with magic Indian words. They descend a staircase and stand before a copper door, which opens inwards at a

magic command. A monstrous Moor who is on guard behind it, is struck unconscious to the floor by the Brahmana, who utters a prayer and breathes on him. They then come to a crystal hall, the gates of which are guarded by two fire-breathing dragons. These also are rendered powerless by magic. The two then reach a second hall, entirely of rubies and carbuncles, in the entrance of which are six diamond female figures.

Passing through a marvellously decorated passage-way, they finally reach a room in whose four corners there are respectively, gold, rubies, a silver jug of water, and a small heap of black earth. In the middle, in a priceless coffin, lies the embalmed body of a king; a hieroglyphic inscription on a gold tablet contains a warning to onlookers. It is, as Hassan learns in answer to his questions, one of the old kings of Egypt, the builder of this subterranean vault. He possessed the Philosophers' Stone, and all the riches which astonish Hassan here have come from the heap of black earth lying in the corner. Hassan doubts this. The Brahmana answers: To prove it to you, I shall recite to you two Turkish verses which contain the whole secret of the Philosophers' Stone. They are as follows: "Betroth the bride of the West to the Prince of China; a child will come from them, the Sultan of beautiful countenance."

And further the Brahmana says: I shall explain to you the secret meaning of these words. Let the dry Adamas earth, the diamond-earth which comes from the East, be saturated with moisture; from this will arise the philosophic Mercury who is all-powerful in nature and who can produce the Sun and the Moon, that is, gold and silver, and when he ascends the throne, then he will turn pebbles into diamonds and other precious stones.

The silver utensil which lies in one corner, contains water, that is, the moisture with which the dry earth was made wet, in order to change it into the condition in which it lies here. If you take merely a handful from this heap, then you will be able, if you wish, to change every metal in Egypt into silver or into gold, and every stone into diamonds or rubies.

"A stone is found"; it is found once and for all by the seeker in this seemingly insignificant black earth of everyday life. Usually however, the alchemists achieved it by much effort and great labour. They sought to produce artificially what nature herself offered to others freely and without effort.

Therein lies the difference between the direct and the indirect path which leads to purification. In most religions these two very differing methods are distinguished. Everywhere we see alongside those blessed people whom a god or simple nature herself granted the fullness of knowledge and wisdom, those others who seek to make their way to the sources of divine life in long and painful struggle amidst thousands of trials and tribulations. In the same way we find in the history of alchemy, alongside the few who could call the stone their own at any time, the many others who tried to prepare it by their experiments with matter.

From the numerous different elements, something was brewed which was supposed to possess the fullness of worldly existence in pure unity. Of white and red, it was believed, the stone had to be composed, of male and female. The new and higher being of forces and substances must arise from their "betrothal."

The metals were mixed; the names of the metals were applied to just those different sides of reality which had to combine in order to form, through their combination, a higher being. Quicksilver, sulphur and salt, so it was said, must be combined in the right proportions; this would produce the *lapis*, the Stone, as the crown of creation.

By quicksilver—mercury—was meant a liquid, spiritual being, the motive-force which is inherent in all substances. By sulphur, however, was meant the inner warmth and fiery force of all beings. And *sal*—salt—was the combining force in things, a negative principle, which causes all other energies to coagulate and condense.

The electron, an alloy of gold and silver, and the holiest of metals, was for a long time regarded as the highest of all substances, and the great saint, Thomas Aquinas, comments on the electron in the following words: "It indicates nothing else but our lord Jesus Christ, the mediator between God and man; the electron combines the virtues of gold with those of silver; the latter acquires a higher splendour, the former diminishes its own. In the same way in God's Son also, the nature of divinity is combined with our own; the latter acquires a higher splendour, the former moderates that of its majesty for our eye."

The male character of the sun and gold comes into contact in the electron with the female forces of the moon and silver.

Even the different precious-stones, according to the alchemists, owed their value respectively to their content of male or female qualities. In general, the darker stones were regarded as male, the brighter as female. Most desired, however, were naturally those precious stones which could be called "hybrid," because it was believed that male and female characteristics were combined in them.

The art of producing such stones synthetically was already highly developed at a relatively early period. Books dealing with these practices are usually ascribed to the Egyptian queen Cleopatra, because she is regarded as the first prophetess of precious stone alchemy.

It is said that Cleopatra once made a wager with the Roman general Mark Antony who was her guest, as to which of them could prepare the most costly feast for the other. Antony had a tremendously rich banquet prepared; the tables groaned beneath the burden of choice foods and dainties of rare kinds, and the number of dishes seemed to have no end. On the next day the Queen invited Antony to her palace. But where were the tables and the dishes? In their stead Cleopatra seized a pearl of inestimable value, dissolved it before Antony's eyes in a glass of vinegar and drank his health with it. In this way she completely defeated all Antony's efforts and won the wager.

In the far-Eastern world, also, the pearl is often used as the symbol of highest wisdom. The "gold-pearl" or "Marigold" had to be obtained and an elixir against death thereby achieved. Today in Chinese folklore, all sorts of precious stones and pearls are regarded as remedies or talismans. An old Chinese myth speaks of the "oil of precious-stones" which flows from inaccessible mountains, gradually coagulating for some 10,000 years and finally becoming the plant of immortality, which gives the happy possessor an almost eternal life.

9. THE PSEUDO-ALCHEMY OF THE CAULDRON COOKS

HAD THE ALCHEMISTS SUCCEEDED in preparing pure gold, then the history of alchemy would not only have thereby been ended, but alchemy would have completely ceased to be what it had really been since its origin: the attempt to raise this whole

world of ours to a higher form of existence by the transformation of matter.

The great initiates of alchemy, the "adepts" of the mysterious science, always knew this. In fact they treated the manufacture of gold as a thoroughly uninteresting side line, and therefore only spoke of gold-making in order to mislead the uninitiated

What significance would it have had, if men had finally succeeded after much effort in producing real gold? According to the Ancients, even animals understood how to produce gold. An Arabic book of about 900 speaks of gold-digging ants as large as cats, living in East Africa.

All the mixing and heating of substances in retorts has at the most a preparatory value; it can serve at best as an introduction for the student before he can be initiated into the deeper and actual secrets of true alchemy. If, however, this external activity is elevated to being the main thing, then this must lead to a grotesque misunderstanding of hermetical science.

This misunderstanding explains the various groups of erring alchemists who were always vigorously rejected by the true adepts as "pseudo-alchemists" or "cauldron-cooks" and were often despised. All "metallists," who hoped to find the stone by melting and mixing different metals, are on the wrong path. Equally mistaken are the "mineralists," who want to prepare from acids and salts the "universal solvent," in which all substances without exception will dissolve and thereby surrender their own individuality.

To these belong also the "refining-water cooks" who wanted to transmute silver into gold by the essences they brewed.

The "air-fishermen," on the other hand, hoped to be able to inhale the fundamental substance in the form of an astral salt on spring nights. They took little bottles with them into which they breathed this valuable air. They then dropped water into the bottle, in order to prepare the "virginal milk" and to transform this into "virginal earth," which "hovered over the head and had never yet been trodden by the foot of man."

The old writings mention further: spittle-gatherers, scavengers, urine-boilers and dung-searchers. For centuries there existed the so-called "filth-pharmacy," in which most of the medicines were prepared from the excrement of men or animals.

The Neapolitan Santanelli described a century ago a recipe

for making a panacea for various diseases. According to this, blood must be fermented and then allowed to dry. Then it is put into a blown bird's egg and placed under a brooding hen. In the same time taken by birds to develop in the egg and creep out, the desired stone is also brought to completion in this uniform, mild heat, and it can be used for all cures imaginable.

Others, again, sought to obtain the stone from semen, or made herbal extracts, thinking that they could distill the essence of life from the green floating on the surface of ponds—"the green slime fallen from heaven."

If one tests the prescriptions of all these cauldron-cooks, then one must always admit, perhaps to one's own astonishment, that there is something good in most of them. There is a kernel of truth in it all; only the way, of course, in which all such practices were conducted was bizarre, as the language and expressions of the alchemists has everywhere been.

It has often been said that the unintelligible language of the alchemists and the repellent character of their cooking, is merely a cunning form of concealing what was actually intended. In other words, the alchemists only put forward the names of metals, liquids and plants in order to conceal something quite different. Gold and quicksilver, diamonds and dung, blood and sweat, were all only names intended to keep secret the real alchemistic process from intruding laymen.

This certainly had been the intention of the alchemists. Usually, however, they themselves had implicit belief in their practices as they describe them to us. They are precisely for each one the path of sublimation destined and suitable for him.

Alchemy, as we saw, has indeed the characteristic that the transformation of the whole spiritual and bodily world of men must take place in it. Therefore it is always concerned with matter, and with the momentary completion of a detail in the treatment of matter. It is quite characteristic of alchemy that in the end one really believed salvation and holiness could be secured by cooking strange metallic stews.

What does it matter, if in the process one remained caught up in the details of material reality and in very limited spheres? The entire and complete all-sidedness of existence, the eternal unity of all substances and forces, and the highest wisdom of mystic vision are inaccessible to us anyway, in our limited hu-

man form. If we wish to attain it and so raise ourselves completely above petty details, then we must of course, first change ourselves into beings of a different kind. We would have to cast off all our limited, specialized and individualized egoistic being. We would have to surrender our lower Ego, in order to acquire a higher Self.

But this would no longer be the indirect path, but the "direct path" of the higher initiates.

10. THE DECLINE OF ALCHEMY THROUGH BECOMING INTELLIGIBLE

THE PHYSICIAN PARACELSUS and the mystic Jakob Boehme are the destroyers of alchemy, since in their writings they give the "real meaning" of alchemistic symbolism. An alchemy that is understood is no longer alchemy.

"Making a thing intelligible" means suiting it to the intelligence. But "intellect" is no original characteristic of man, but a capacity that has only recently been acquired in the cultural development of the human race. The period of innate intelligence was preceded by a mythical period in which man had a completely different and immediate access to the depths of reality

Alchemy is the attempt to regain once more the magical conception of the world of the early period, on the soil of the newly-won higher consciousness. This attempt had prospects of success as long as its peculiar formulation and practices remained secret from the newly-awakened critical intelligence and was not subject to its disintegrating influence.

Therefore, taken historically, alchemy exists in a period in which a change in the human attitude to the world takes place. It belongs to the various efforts of such times not to lose the old and the good completely. In such transition-periods there necessarily arises the need for keeping secret that treasure of knowledge which a few far-seeing men seek to save from the old form and carry over into the new.

Only those who are not quite sure of themselves and who doubt the power of truth in their knowledge, have this need for secretiveness, because they shrink from confessing their views openly and submitting them to the critical judgment of the

spirit of the time. All secretiveness, all "occultism," arises from weakness, from the desire to preserve a disappearing knowledge. The occultist, the magician, wants to preserve something which really can no longer be preserved and which will also one day float away from him in the living stream of life to new shores. This is the tragedy of all magicians.

The more the newly awakening intelligence developed and the more critical it became, the more did magicians and occultists have to hide and cloak their treasure of knowledge. An "oath of secrecy inspiring horror and repulsion" had to be taken by everyone who wanted to be initiated into alchemistic practices. The whole system could be preserved from collapse only by an unbroken silence. Wherever alchemistic doctrines were spread in word or writing, it was done by the use of "covering names," and only the initiated could guess the actual forces and substances that were meant.

In Paracelsus and Jakob Boehme the spirit of the new time awoke to life. It had not quite arrived; this is revealed in the numerous uncertain terms and unclarities in their language. The distinction between the higher alchemy and the pseudo-alchemy of the cauldron-cooks is not yet clearly made by them. Therefore they sometimes condemn alchemy, and at other times they praise it in the highest terms.

Paracelsus and Boehme give to us of today the possibility of "understanding" alchemy, because they tell us in detail what "really" lay behind all those strange experiments and what their purpose "really" was. But whoever has in this way discovered a meaning in practices and cults and ceremonials of any kind, is no longer in the habit of practicing such cults himself. An "explained" or rationalized ceremony is no longer a ceremony.

The old alchemists, too, knew of a way of overcoming alchemistic practices by a still higher intuition. They rightly placed alongside the "indirect path" of the transformation of matter, the "direct path" of mystic vision which led to the height of intuition not by the round-about way of moulding material existence.

This distinction between the direct and the indirect path is the same as we find in India, between Raja-Yoga and Hatha-Yoga. The one, here as well as there, is purely a step to the other, and is completely removed and finished with as such, as soon as

the higher path is reached. And for most, such a preparatory procedure is indispensable, even although the last step on the way to the highest illumination can no longer be described as a step, but can only be achieved by a jump.

But we must beware of believing that all those who reject and ridicule alchemy, have already in its place attained to the higher, direct path. Only he who feels himself inspired by a higher power, and with this consciousness feels himself already liberated from the shortcomings of the lower world, is justified in setting aside, as far as he himself is concerned, the forms and prescriptions of the indirect path. He no longer needs alchemistic practices, because the alchemistic process of transformation has been accomplished in him.

All others must beware of scorning a path by which, in times past, untold numbers have attained the purification of their soul, and with it, the transformation of their world.

DIAGRAMS

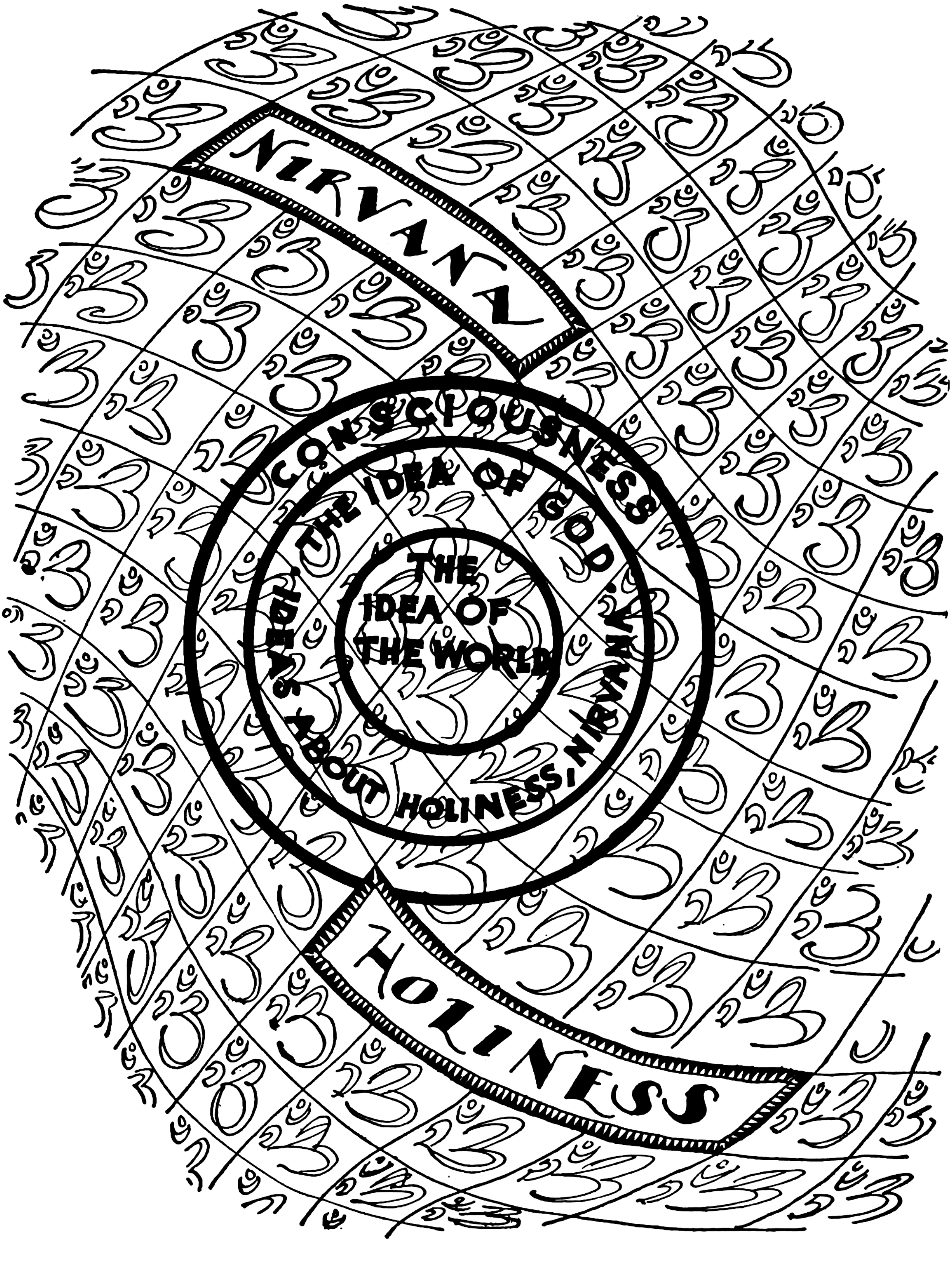
THE UNIVERSE OF PRIMITIVE MAN

PRIMITIVE MAN as he is pictured in Frazer's "Golden Bough" and in the various works of Levy-Bruhl, has no clear-cut idea of the world—its border-lines are broken and indistinct. Neither has he any definite idea about himself; his ego is still in a jelly-fish state of shapelessness, adaptable to all possible circumstances, changes and interpretations. He feels that the world around him is filled with uncanny powers—generally called by a Melanesian word "mana"—which are dangerous and therefore forbidden or approachable only under certain precautions (in Polynesian language: tabu).

This miraculous power-essence can appear in any special experiences within life, which are apt to make man aware of the inconsistency, or let us say, of the wonder of his existence. The ordinary, matter-of-course reality becomes doubtful in moments of contact with unusual events in the sky—eclipses, thunderstorms—with high mountains and strange trees, strong animals or with the experiences of war and death, of childbirth and witchcraft.

These single spots within his world thus become symbolical for that background-reality, which Rudolf Otto in his book about "The Idea of the Holy" calls "The Numinosum," which can affect man in two ways—as a menacing and awe-inspiring power (the tremendum) or as helpful and saving (the fascinosum). These experimental qualities being projected on the Absolute then become attributes or characteristics of God.

1. PRIMITIVE MAN


NIRVANA
THE IDEA OF
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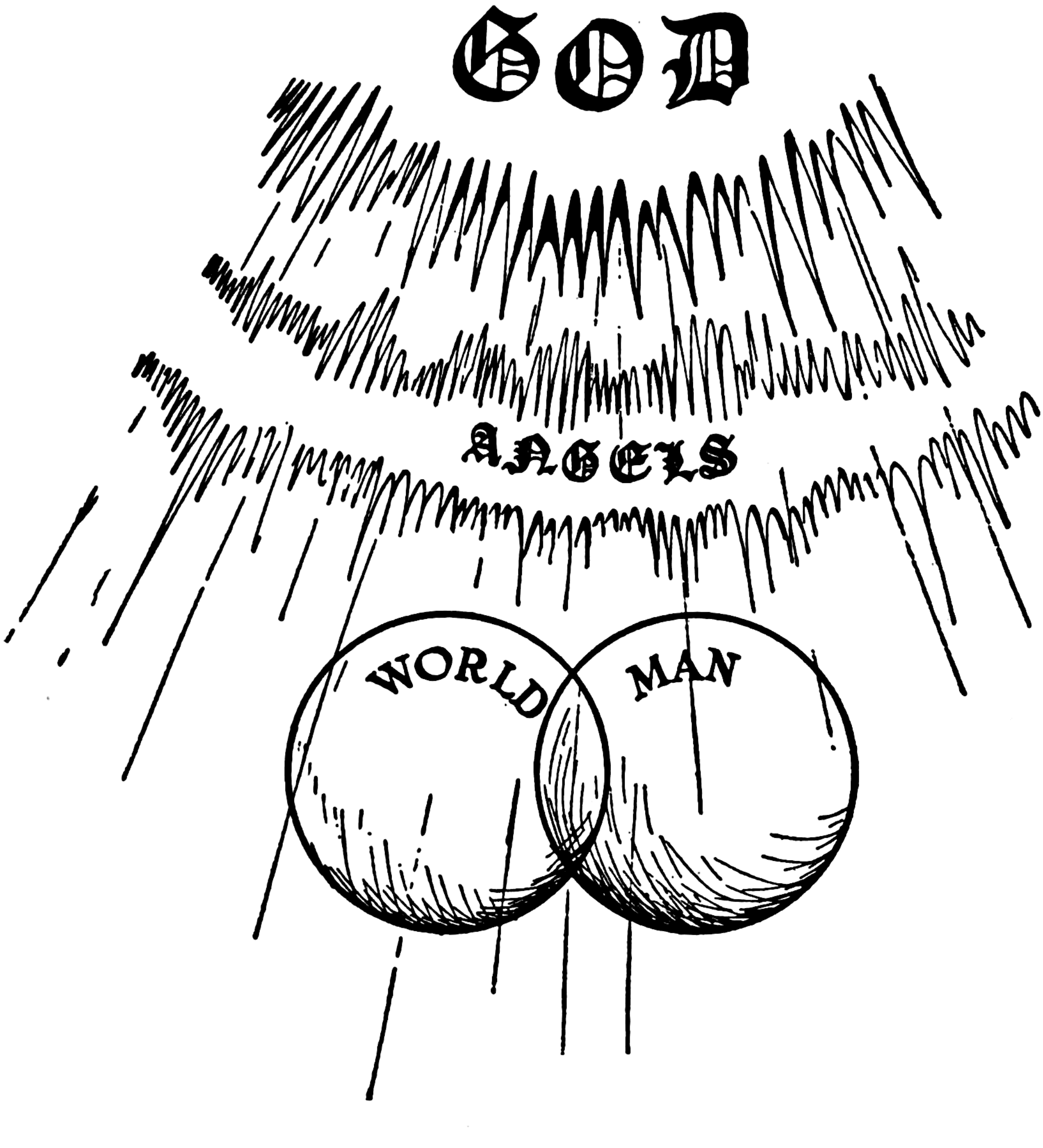
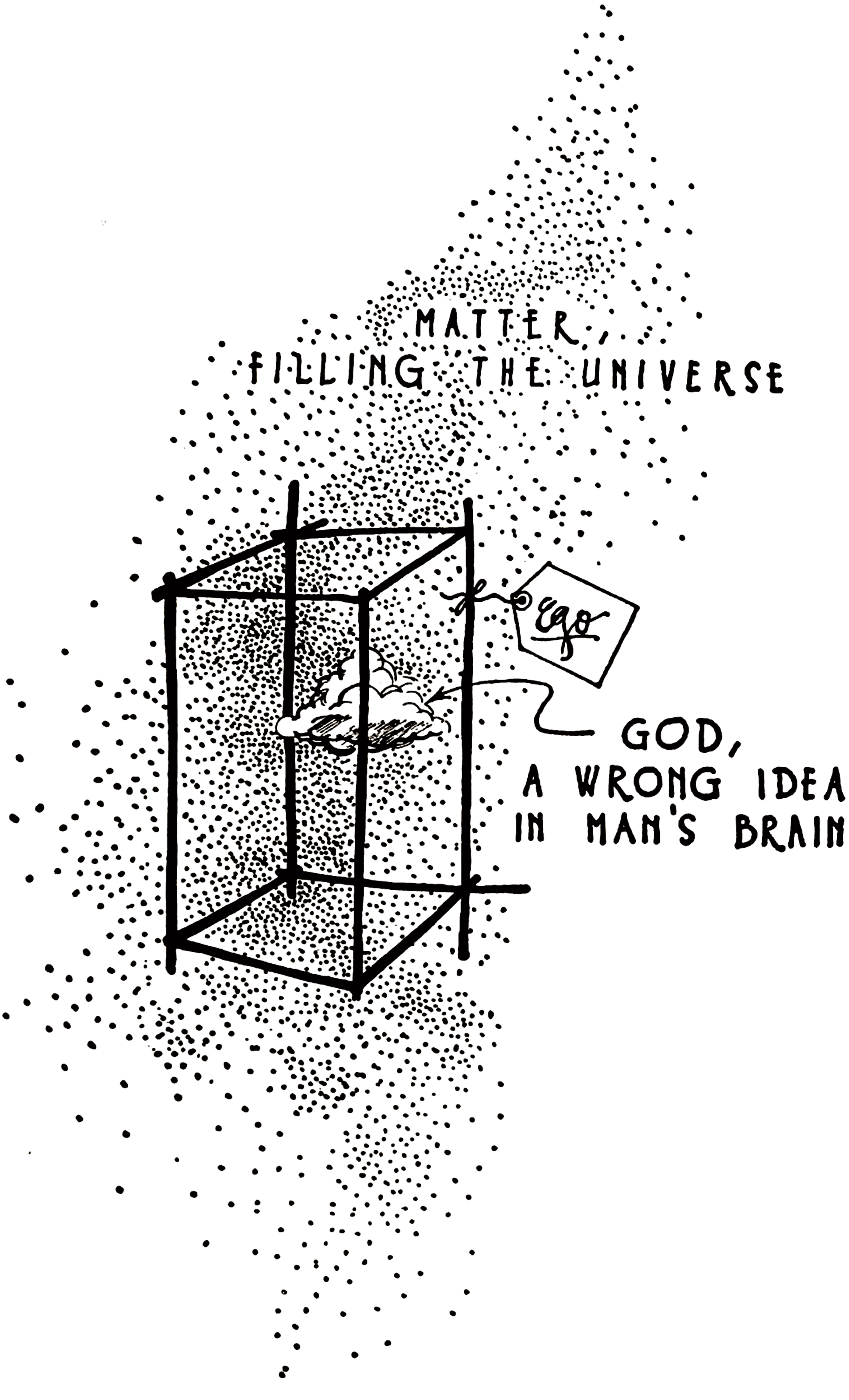
IDEA OF
THE WORLD
ABOUT HOLINESS, NIRVANA
HOLINESS



3. TRANSCENDENTALISM, JUDAISM

REALM OF GOD
AHURA MAZDA
WORLD
BATTLE
MAN
CONSTANT
REALM OF THE DEVIL
ANGRA MAINYU



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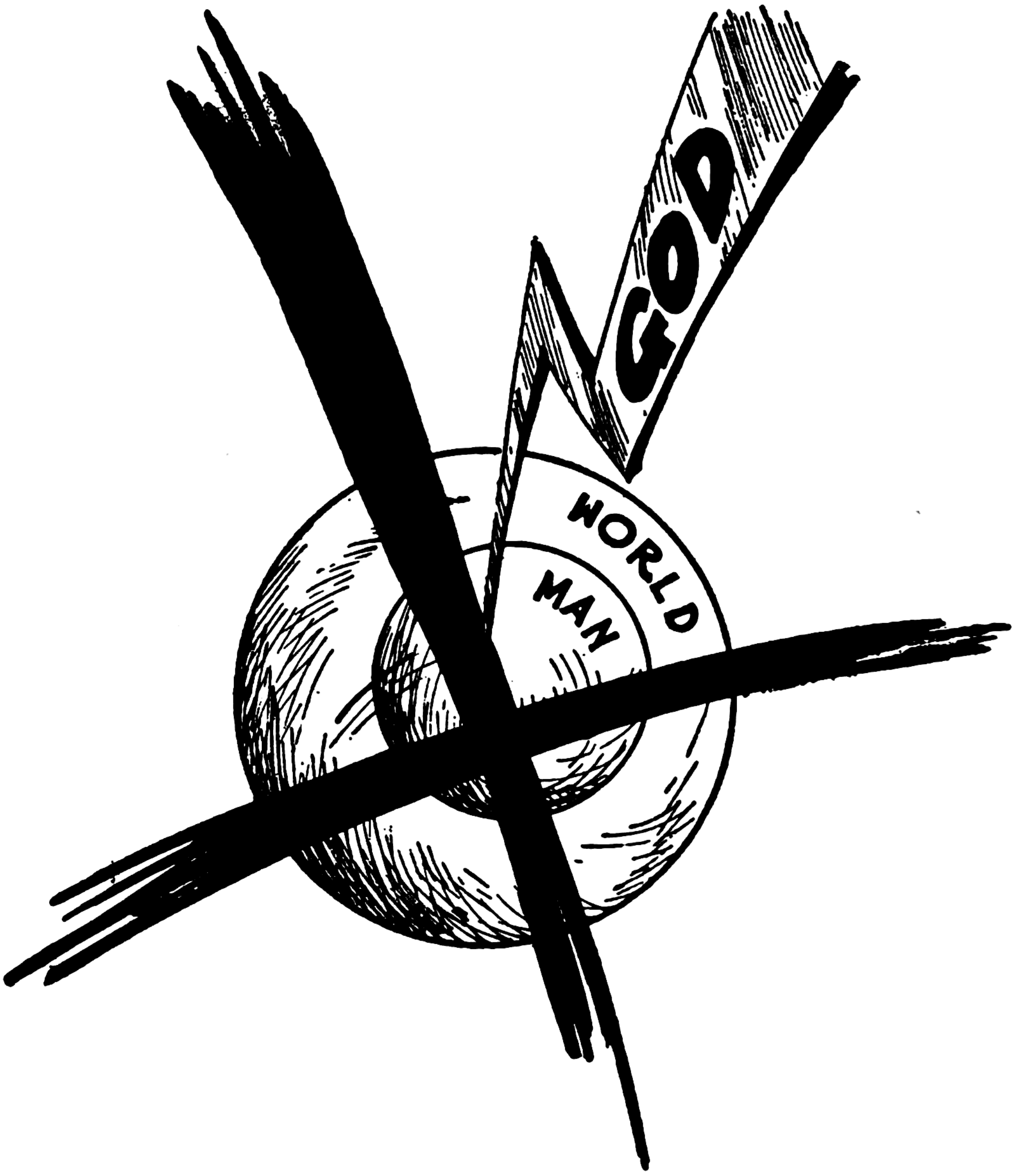
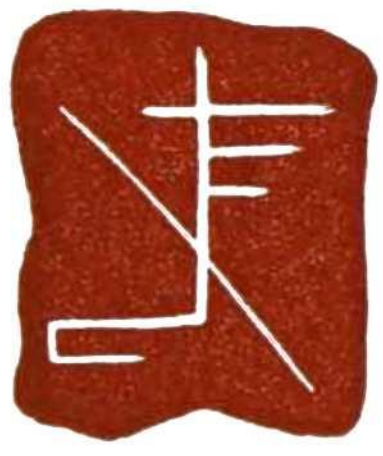


6. DIALECTICAL THEOLOGY (KARL BARTH)

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